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QUEENSGLEY, GLOUCESTER.

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S E R M O N S

ON THE

Following SUBJECTS,

V I Z.

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- II. GRATITUDE to GOD.
- III. MERCY.
- IV. PRIDE.
- V. SINFUL ANGER.
- VI. The ADVANTAGES of EARLY PIETY.
- VII. The UNSEARCHABLENESS of GOD'S
WAYS, and the BENEFITS of AFFLIC-
TIVE PROVIDENCE.

By MARY DEVERELL.

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APPOLOGY

To the PUBLIC.

WHEN a female writer pre-
sumes to obtrude upon the
world the productions of her leisure
hours, under the title of *Sermons*,
it may possibly be expected that some
excuse should be made for so daring
an usurpation of the sacred province.

It is therefore with the strictest
truth asserted, that a strange con-
currence of circumstances has on
this occasion, united to usher into
the world those manuscripts, which,
like many others that make their
appearance in print, were not de-
signed,

signed, at the time they were penned, for the inspection of the public. --- These circumstances, as they would many of them reflect on private characters, can with no propriety be taken notice of; and those which flowed from the feelings of generosity and the glow of friendship, I am most unwillingly forced to suppress, as the recital of them would be too copious for this writing. --- In compliment, however, to the opinion of some respectable characters among the clergy, I would both readily and gladly have altered the title of *Sermons*, to that of *Essays*, *Reflections*, or any other which might have been deemed more proper, as less assuming, than the present. But as those gentlemen could not, from the form and nature of the compositions, allow the equal propriety of any other title; and as my first subscribers would not relinquish their claim to the publication

lication under the identical denomination, for which they had given in their names; I have, *for their Satisfaction*, retained it.

BUT it is not barely for the title of these sheets, nor yet for their appearance in print, that I shall very possibly have the misfortune to incur censure, but even for writing any thing in the form of a serious and religious discourse. In this however, I have the consolation to think that I am by no means singular, and I have only to regret that I am so very unequal to those distinguished patterns of every female excellence, who have ventured to submit their productions, in this way, to the perusal of the public.---But how little lenity soever I may expect to meet with from the world in general; from the clergy, to whom I may be supposed to have
given

given most offence, as having invaded their peculiar function; I flatter myself I shall receive a less rigorous sentence; convinced, as I am by experience, of the generosity, candour, and benevolence, which characterize their profession. And surely if it be allowed, as it usually is, that if our amusements are but innocent, it is alone sufficient to render them excusable; it would be a hard case indeed, if those that habituate the mind to serious and religious contemplations, are, merely upon that account, to be deemed criminal, or yet ridiculous. But no sober person, I am perswaded, will condemn me, if I have incurred no heavier charge, than that of devoting my leisure hours to an employment of this nature.

As I wrote only in a manner to please myself, scholastic debates, or scientific divinity, could not be supposed

posed to have afforded me that serene delight I sought, had inclination led me to it. But there is no merit in declining what I am in no respect capable of. Mysterious points in Theology are left to the erudition of the schools; and perhaps those deep controversial subjects would have been as little pleasing, or improving, to the generality of my sex, as they are to her whose soul, as ROPE describes his *Indians*,

“Proud Science never taught to stray,

“Far as the Solar Walk, or Milky-way.

THE subjects I have treated of are such as occurred to my mind from observation on the sacred oracles, without knowing at the time of writing, they had been treated of by much abler pens: by one less advantageously circumstanced, or less instructed in the arts of literature, they could scarcely be, as my education

tion has been as confined, as my life has been domestic. Therefore from a just sense of these disadvantages, as well as of the narrowness of my own capacity, I have not presumed to lay these discourses before the public, till they had first undergone a revival from proper judges, lest I should incur that *woe* denounced by the Prophet against those *that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight*. And to those Reverend Gentlemen who have honour'd me with their approbation, assistance, and advice, on this occasion; and likewise to all others, who have co-operated to facilitate and promote the publication by a variety of the most friendly offices; I take this opportunity to make my most grateful and sincere acknowledgments.

THE delay of the publication so long beyond my wishes, or intentions,

tions, has been occasioned by numerous disappointments, so various and cogent, that I flatter myself, if known, would plead some excuse for me with every person of candour, as the dispensations of Providence, by sickness and other misfortunes, retarded for a tedious time the benevolent offices of those good Divines engaged in my favour. It would be impertinence to trouble my readers with a detail of other circumstances, as remissness or neglect had no share in them; and they consisted wholly of a long chain of unfortunate and intervening accidents, equally out of my power to foresee or prevent. Otherwise these manuscripts would have been some time since committed to the press. And if any of those productions which proceed from it are intitled to more peculiar lenity, it is certainly those that are forced from it in self-vindication, for which reason *Merry* is hoped for from

from the dread courts of criticism.
But however I may be condemned,
or acquitted at a human tribunal,
Omnipotence is not restrained, and
may do good by the weakest instru-
ment: After all, the public have
an undoubted right to pass what judg-
ment they please on the feeble efforts
in divinity, made

in my favour. It would be improp-
riety to trouble my readers with a
detail of other circumstances, as re-
sulting from neglect, or neglect in
them; and they consisted wholly of a
long chain of unfortunate and inter-
vening accidents, equally out of my
power to prevent, or otherwise.

Obedient humble Servant,

these manuscripts would have been
some time since committed to the press.
And if any of those productions which
were intended to more

Mary Deverell

peculiar tenity, it is certainly those that
are forced from it in self-vindication,
for which reason

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* * The Author has reason to fear that the names of many who have honoured her with their subscriptions may have been omitted in the List, by having been forgot to have been inserted at some of the places where the names were taken in, particularly at the Pump-rooms at Bath and Bristol; a circumstance not unlikely to result from the hurry of these places in a full season. In that case, the Author requests, that those Gentlemen and Ladies who may have thereby been prevented from having the books sent, would favour her with a line, addressed to the Printer, in consequence of which the omission will be supplied.

S E R M O N

I SAMUEL XVIII. 3, 4.

Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

THE celebrated love and uninterested friendship of JONATHAN and DAVID, seem to have flowed, not merely from that noble warmth and similarity of soul, for which they were so peculiarly distinguished, but from a still higher principle. For in scripture it appears that the affection, which JONATHAN conceived for DAVID, commenced at a very early period, and, as it should seem, before he could possibly have given such proofs of superior worth, as might justify a wise Prince, in making a sacred covenant of friendship with a poor Shepherd. He therefore seems to have been led to it by a divine impulse. For in the first verse of this chapter we are told, that it came to pass

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when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, (and of giving him an account of his parentage and kindred) that the soul of Jonathan was knit unto the soul of David, and that Jonathan loved him as his own soul. From this time one spirit seemed to animate both; and the flame which was kindled in the breast of JONATHAN, was lighted up as vigorously in that of DAVID; nor could all Israel produce such another pair of friends.

WHETHER DAVID at this time knew that he was anointed by SAMUEL to be successor to SAUL, is not clear from scripture: nor does it appear that JONATHAN was apprised of it. However, when afterwards he became fully acquainted with it, he was not, on that account, induced to dissolve the covenant between them, as might too naturally have been expected from a less generous Prince, but to ratify it, and that too with an oath, the mutual seal of their fidelity. Nor was it only for themselves that they entered into this very solemn engagement, but likewise for their posterity. For thus we read in the concluding verse of the 20th chapter, *and Jonathan said to David, go in peace, forasmuch as we have both of us sworn in the name of the Lord, saying, the Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever.* For in the

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AND the reciprocal conduct of these illustrious friends was afterwards, we find, suitable to this engagement. JONATHAN, in whose power it was to give the first proof of his kindness and fidelity, immediately offered DAVID his most vigorous aid, to procure for him that peace, which he so ardently wished him. *Whatsoever thy soul desireth, saith he, I will even do it for thee.* These professions were not, as is too commonly the case, the cool distant tender of dry civility; no, they sprang from the heart, as the uniform tenor of his future actions fully demonstrated. When his friend's wants were pressing, and his assistance directly requisite, he did not dismiss him, as FELIX, upon another occasion, did St. PAUL, with saying, *go thy way for this time, and at a more convenient season I will send for thee*; A civil refusal, which sounds like the knell of departing hopes, and often leaves a sting in the breast of the unhappy suppliant; the modesty of whose nature, or the delicacy of whose situation, may not permit his distress to be twice told. And to put him to the unnecessary pain of doing it, is not acting by that golden rule, which was the measure of JONATHAN'S conduct. He knew DAVID'S distress was urgent; he was sensible of his danger, and was therefore as diligent to remove it, as if it were his own.

BUT what peculiarly distinguishes and exalts the friendship of JONATHAN, is, it's singular disinterestedness. For though DAVID was the only man that stood in his way to his father's throne, and was his rival for the crown and kingdom; yet was not the fervency of his affection for him in the least abated by that consideration. No, it was established on a sacred foundation, and could not be shaken though all the powers of the world were combined against it. His friend's interest and not his own, seemed to be his only care. — He was as vigilant as a centinel for his security, as swift as an eagle for his safety, and as obedient as a servant to fulfil his will. In his defence, how nobly did he expose himself, to all the transports of his father's fury! How industrious was he to defeat the plots that were continually laid by him against his life! And how warmly, upon all occasions, did he plead his cause!

BUT, on the contrary, how earnest was the rancorous and implacable SAUL, to shake his fidelity, and dissolve his friendship! He would fain persuade his son, that he had more regard for his interest, than he had himself, and with the utmost bitterness upbraids him for a conduct, in appearance, so singularly impolitic, fatal, and disgraceful. *Thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman,* says he, *do not I know that thou hast chosen*
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the son of Jesse, to thine own confusion? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me; for he shall surely die.

BUT how just and pathetic is JONATHAN'S enquiry in reply! *Wherefore shall he be slain? What evil hath he done?* The frowns of his father and of his sovereign, could not deter him from doing justice to his friend, and vindicating his innocence; nor was the throne of *Israel* any temptation to him, to withdraw his affection from the man he loved. Even the javelin darted from the hand of SAUL, by which his own life was immediately endangered, served but to increase his ardour. But when he saw that his intercession was vain, and that his father was not to be diverted from his cruel and bloody purpose, his heart swelled with honest indignation, and he was too violently agitated, even to take necessary sustenance. For we are told, that *Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day; for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.* His sympathetic breast most anxiously felt for him. Nor can this be matter of surprize, when he had before declared, that *he loved him as his own soul.*

AND

AND there seems indeed to be a resemblance in their persons, as well as minds; for JONATHAN'S cloaths fitted DAVID when SAUL'S armour would not; and probably he was as glad to put off the one, as to wear the other. For to generous minds, it is very painful to owe obligations to persons of contrary dispositions. I cannot pretend to determine how far it may be a culpable pride, which creates in us that strong repugnance which we naturally feel, to owe them to those, whom we know to be not well affected towards us. But if the favours of disaffection are irksome, the gifts of friendship are doubly valuable. That which gives us real pain, when received from one man, affects us, when bestowed by another, with the most lively pleasure. Of this, DAVID, on the present occasion, must be truly sensible. And all, who saw the ruddy youth divested of his russet coat and scrip, and adorned with the royal robes of his illustrious friend, must be ready to say, *See Jonathan's other self, altho' it be in a different form!* Sumptuous dress becomes high stations; and they who wear costly robes, are in Kings' houses. DAVID was in a King's house, and was designed by Providence to be the immediate successor to the crown. And his elevation, altho' at the expence of his own claims, his generous friend was ambitious of promoting; and for that reason delighted to
 see

see him arrayed, in a manner suitable to the
 heir apparent. Well, therefore, might DAVID
 say, *Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the
 love of women.* For such is the fondness of
 that sex for shew and external ornament, that
 I believe it is seldom seen, that they can
 acquire greatness of mind sufficient to give
 it from their own persons, to adorn their
 rivals. Indeed were they capable of so much
 heroism, the Queen of Sheba, in all her glory,
 could not appear with greater advantage to
 the external eye, than such women evidently
 must to the intellectual. Such however was
 the magnanimous spirit of JONATHAN, or
 he would not have stript himself to do honour
 to his humble friend; an honour peculiarly
 enhanced by the mode of conferring it.
 ACHISHERUS, it is said, asked his favourite,
*What should be done to the man, whom the
 King delighted to honour;* to whom the am-
 bitious HAMAN made answer, *Let the royal
 apparel be brought, which the King useth to
 wear, and the horse that the King rideth upon,
 and the crown royal which is set upon his head;
 and public proclamation be made thro' the city:
 thus shall it be done to the man, whom the King
 delighteth to honour.*

THE proud man, who wished and thought
 this honour designed for himself, could not
 mount higher in idea, nor devise any thing
 more magnificent. In a manner, no less
 superb

superb and splendid, was JOSEPH, in *Egypt*, distinguished by the gracious and royal PHARAOH. And DANIEL, at the *Perſian* court, was clothed in scarlet, and had a chain of gold put about his neck, by the command of BELSHAZZAR.

BUT whatever propriety or dignity there might be in the gift, it was the principle, from which it flowed, which stamped on it it's chiefest value. Friendship is seated in the heart, and is equally estimable, whether apparelled in a russet coat, or a royal robe. For externals are no more to the essence of it, than the casket is to the jewel it contains. It's excellence is intrinsic, and it's due praise would exhaust the most copious language. It has indeed been the favourite theme of writers in every age; but their most eloquent panegyrics, shew rather that they wished to do justice to their subject, than that they really did it. A true friend is thus described by one of them: "He is the comfort of miseries; the guide of difficulties; the joy of life; the treasure of earth; and no other than a good Angel clothed in flesh." An union with such a friend doubles our pleasure, and divides our pain; and is often dearer to us than the nearest ties of kindred. Indeed without friendship, even Heaven itself would not be the mansion of bliss; for this it is which constitutes that harmony, without which

which, happiness can have no existence. And as to this terrestrial abode, it's choicest delights, without it, are but insipid and disgusting. From friendship, society derives all it's relish; and without society, even EDEN would be irksome. ADAM could not gather the fruits of Paradise, when solitary, with satisfaction. Even brutes associate with their kindred brutes. But meet society is not all that man feels the want of; he wants a friend; he wants a second self, to whom, without reserve, he may give vent to all the effusions of his heart. The celebrated Dr. YOUNG has thus expressed himself on this subject.

“ Know’st thou, LORENZO! what a Friend contains?
 “ As bees *mixt nectar* draw from fragrant flow’rs,
 “ So men from FRIENDSHIP, *wisdom and delight*;
 “ Twins ty’d by nature, if they part they die.
 “ Hast thou no Friend to set thy mind abroad?
 “ Good *sense* will stagnate. Thoughts shut up want air,
 “ And spoil, like bales unopen’d to the sun.
 “ Had thought been all, sweet speech had been deny’d;
 “ Speech, thought’s canal! speech, thought’s criterion too.
 “ Thought in the mine, may come forth gold or dross;
 “ When coin’d in word, we know it’s *real* worth.
 “ If sterling; store it for thy future use;
 “ ’Twill buy thee benefit; perhaps, renown.”

THE generous fervour of a steady friend, in whom are happily united the will and power of doing good, has such an emanation of the divinity in it, as must supremely exalt the character it animates. And what con-

fidence may we not repose in such a friend! Therefore we ought to lay open our hearts to him without reserve, as clients do their causes to their agents; and should submit to his examination every hidden thought, if we would expect the benefit of an unbiassed judgment. For otherwise how can we be said to blend souls? or how is it possible for our friend to form that impartial and just opinion of the case, as may enable him to give us the best advice? Without such a full developement of every circumstance, we may be led into such a labyrinth of errors, as will not leave it in the power of any friendship to extricate us.

BESIDES, it is derogatory of the true value of a friend, and an abatement of that confidence, to which he is entitled, if we behave towards him with shyness and reserve. By such a conduct we deprive ourselves of the rich fruits of consolation, the gentle soothing of compassion, and the cool deliberations of mature judgment. By the weight of adversity and the bitterness of affliction, we are often deprived of the power of thinking for ourselves, or of devising means to meliorate our condition; but in this wilderness of imagination, friendship will benevolently lend it's aid, and will excite a hope, which, like a reviving cordial, will keep life from sinking beneath the weary load.

confidence

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BUT these advantages are only to be hoped for, from the sensible and intelligent, as well as sincere; from those who are blessed with sentiment, probity, generosity, and all the fine feelings of nature. In friendship between persons of this happy frame, and elevated temper, the heart may dilate itself in mutual complacence and esteem; and the mind may exult in all the luxury of social intercourse. Mutual happiness, and mutual safety, are the noble privileges of such a friendship. It consists not in a torrent of kind words, but a series of kind actions. It has virtue for it's basis, and reason for it's guide. It is active and vigilant, prudent and cautious, steady and intrepid, sincere and permanent, warm and affectionate. It is at all times illustrious, but never appears to greater advantage than when it combats difficulties. It shines brightest in the gloom of adversity; and in the chill hour of affliction sends forth the warmest rays. It braves with cheerfulness the greatest dangers; and, instead of cooling, acquires fresh ardour from resistance. How excellent then is true friendship, and how valuable a faithful friend! But let us hear the animated effusions of an eastern imagination on this subject. *A faithful friend (the friend whose virtues and qualities I have been now describing) is a strong defence; (says the son of SYRACH) and he that hath found such a one, hath found a treasure. Nothing*

doth countervail a faithful friend, and his excellency is invaluable. A faithful friend is the medicine of life; and they, that fear the Lord, shall find him. Whoso feareth the Lord, shall direct his friendship aright; for as he is, so shall his neighbour be also; that is, the neighbour, whom he shall chuse for his friend.

The royal prophet likewise, has, in many parts of his writings, beautifully enlarged upon this subject. Wicked men, so far from being permitted to share in his friendship, he would not so much as suffer, he says, to remain under his roof. *He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.* And in another Psalm, how fervently does he pray, that God would preserve him from all connection with wicked men, as well as their wicked deeds! *Incline not my heart to any evil thing, says he, to practise wickedness with the workers of iniquity. Let me not eat of their dainties,* says he again in another place. But with the good and virtuous of whatever order, he, on the contrary, gladly associated. *I am a companion, says he, of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.* And again he says, *Let the righteous smite me,* (as the most familiar mark of his friendship) *it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.* From the righteous, who alone

alone are my companions, and with whom I take sweet council, I expect this instance of real regard for me; for he, who is my sincere friend, will always be my faithful reprover.

DAVID, altho' a powerful Monarch, did not regard his station as a privilege from reproof, when his conduct was justly reprehensible. A noble pattern for modern Princes! He delighted in the way of righteousness, and when he erred from it, he esteemed it an act of kindness, even in the humblest of his companions, to admonish him of his error. Indeed a due regard for the rectitude of our conduct, is the best disposition to qualify us for true friendship. For such a disposition will not only permit, but require the mutual exercise of this honest freedom; a requisite so very essential to friendship, that it is never known long to survive it. For the claims of superiority, are the grave of friendship. For however different Providence may have cast our lot in this transitory life, in true friendship there is no pre-eminence. State and form ever vanish before it; and it either finds us equals, or makes us so. The professors of christianity, had, we read, in the infancy of it, all things in common; by which, as to degrees of condition, they were all reduced to a level. This effect of christianity at that time, is the effect of true friendship

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at all times. It not only unites possessions, but unites souls. Nor indeed was the benevolence of Christians under the bright irradiations of the gospel, more illustrious than that of DAVID and JONATHAN under the dark dispensation of the law. So very distinguished indeed was their example, that it approaches nearer, perhaps, than any other upon record, to that of the great Captain of our salvation, who to friendship sacrificed what is of far greater value than any kingdom, even life itself. Greater love, saith he, hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth. But I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my father, I have made known unto you.*—What a divine emblem of this love of our Saviour's to his disciples, was that of JONATHAN to DAVID! For tho' they seem'd congenial souls, yet it appears from sacred history, that JONATHAN loved DAVID first, and that whatsoever he knew of his father, he made known unto him; verifying the truth of what SOLOMON wrote long after, that a brother, or friend, is born for adversity.

For certainly the time of adversity, is the proper season for friendship to exert itself. In the warm sunshine of prosperity, when the

the candle of God illuminates our path, as it did Job's, and our way is plain before us, when public honours and private congratulations give attestation to our merit, and, as it were, encircle us with a transient blaze of glory; we have no occasion to draw upon our friend's benevolence. It is then our time to bestow, and not to ask; and we may say from happy experience, *it is more blessed to give, than to receive.* The rich man, it has been observed, *hath many friends; but the poor is despised of his neighbour.* The train of prosperity is always supported by a multitude of friends; and comforters are never wanting to those, who stand in no need of them. If therefore we are thus happily circumstanced, we may well say, with the good man just mentioned, *the light of our countenance is not cast down.*

BUT when, for the trial of our integrity, Providence thinks fit to reverse the scene; when riches have made themselves wings, and are fled; when the airy bubble, reputation, is likewise gone, and from comforters, those about us, like Job's companions, are turned upbraiders; then is the critical juncture for the discovery of real friendship, from that, which only wears the garb of it. For if it be genuine, it will support us in the day of adversity; and when overwhelmed with terrors, it will not let us sink. *When they pur-*
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sue us as the wind, and our welfare passeth away as a cloud; and when the days of affliction have actually overtaken us; then will our true friends, like the agents of the Almighty, endeavour to bring darkness into light, by an honest and just vindication of our injured characters. Then will they affectionately endeavour to make our righteousness appear as the light, and our just dealing as the noon-day; then will they plead with them, that strive with us, and fight with them, that fight against us.

DAVID piously reposed his confidence in God, and found the friend, that would plead for him; and that too, with such pathos, energy, and generous ardour, as will ever be the admiration of every age. For when will the world produce another JONATHAN? What a disinterested, and yet what an unwearied counsellor! To gain his cause, was to lose a kingdom; and yet for friendship's sake, how nobly did he maintain it, and how affectionately plead it! But when at last he found that all his efforts were ineffectual, and not only endangered his own life, but sharpened the weapons of death against that of his friend; when he perceived that the gloomy and malignant spirit of SAUL was utterly implacable, he desisted indeed from urging that reconciliation, which was no longer to be hoped for; but not from serving his beloved

loved friend. DAVID was still no less the object of his affection, and of his care. His soul was as much knit to the soul of his friend, when in exile, as when in the full possession of court-smiles, and court-honours. His real worth, he knew, was still the same; for merit varies not with the opinion of princes, but with a man's own conduct. The frowns of a court cannot stain the heart, or blemish the soul, however they may blast our pomp, or cancel our greatness. Princes cannot rob us, of what they cannot confer, solid virtue and real worth. Of these, however obnoxious to his indignant Sovereign, DAVID was still possessed; nor had he been guilty of any thing to merit his resentment. Nay, he was persecuted merely for his virtue, because he was that man according to God's own heart, for whom he had destined the kingdom. He seemed as unfortunate as he was worthy, and therefore JONATHAN was now become doubly interested for him, from motives of humanity, as well as from the ties of friendship. He indeed could no longer hope to reinstate him in the possession of his former honours; but all the service, that seemed yet to be in his power, he was resolved to do for him; and therefore immediately went to him in the fields, to acquaint him with the danger which threatened him, that he might, with-

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out loss of time, escape out of the reach of it, and preserve himself by flight.

HERE DAVID must take his leave of his beloved JONATHAN, and commit himself rather to the savages of the forest, than to those of a court. But how affecting, how melancholy, was their parting! their tender embraces were succeeded by a flood of tears. *They wept one with another, until DAVID* ~~succeded~~. And well he might; for he must be very sensible, that hitherto obligations had lain wholly on one side. JONATHAN, as yet, had been the only benefactor; JONATHAN an illustrious Prince, whose favours, from the consideration only of his distinguished eminence, must be greatly heightened, when conferred on an humble shepherd. Of this superiority of his friend, DAVID seems to be fully conscious, as, I think, his conduct, on the present occasion, sufficiently evinces. For it is said, that *he fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times*; a prostration equally expressive of his humility and gratitude. The reflection that the King's son wished him to sit on his father's throne in preference to himself, and that he pursued him, now an unhappy fugitive, with more than brotherly affection, filled him with sentiments too big for utterance. The most humiliating prostration,

stration, and an ocean of tears, were the only tokens he could give, of the grateful feelings of his heart. Indeed a generous disposition must necessarily be overpowered, by a kindness of this magnitude. But while he loved his benefactor; while he embraced him in the arms of the most tender friendship, the elevation of his character could not fail, in some degree, to depreciate him in his own eyes, and, as it were, upbraid him with the inferiority of his condition. *He therefore fell on his face to the ground; and, from a sense of the majesty, as well as kindness, of the person, in whose presence he was, bowed himself three times.*

AND it must be acknowledged that where the disparity of condition is considerable, friendship must ever labour under a great disadvantage. The inferior in fortune, however independent, finds difficulty to assume that ease and freedom, which the commerce of friendship naturally requires, but which an inequality of condition seems almost to forbid. Besides, the claims of superiors upon those in humble circumstances, are usually so very unreasonable and extravagant, as must not only repress esteem, but highly discourage that reciprocation of kind offices, which invariably accompanies sincere friendship. The great, when they accept of benefits, as well as when they confer them,

would have it believed, that their inferiors are still the persons most obliged. Whatever these may do, it is only to be considered as matter of duty, and not of favour. Nor is this all; but the great often extend their claims still farther, and expect not only these kind of assiduities and friendly offices from their inferiors, but likewise formal thanks for their condescension in accepting of them. But where the mind is too generous and rational, to admit sentiments so very illiberal and absurd, it is not often that we find it totally disengaged from the prejudices of superiority. They are few indeed, who, when they themselves are the object of their contemplation, are able to divest the idea of all external considerations. They whose rank or fortune is superior, are always apt to regard themselves as standing upon superior ground, and therefore know not how to admit inferior mortals, however they may esteem their merit, to all the genuine freedoms of friendship. But of this greatness of soul, extraordinary as it is, we nevertheless meet with some instances, even among Princes, and those too, assisted by no other light, than that of nature. I shall at present take notice only of that of AUGUSTUS. Possessed, as he was, of all the power, elevation, and dignity, of a Roman Emperor, with armies at his command, a senate at his feet, and all the known world trembling

trembling at his nod,--how tenderly did he cherish, how nobly cultivate the friendship of MÆCENAS! how highly did he value it! and how deeply, when cancelled by death, did he regret it!

THE rebukes of MÆCENAS were no less dear to him, than his council. How subject every man is, to be misled by his passions, he experienced; and therefore well knew the importance of sincere friendship to guard him against errors. The dictates of such a friendship he as readily obeyed, whether they wore the meek aspect of humble advice, or the rough features of sharp reproof. A remarkable instance of this aimable disposition, recorded of him in history, I cannot omit mentioning. When he sat judging a number of accused persons, MÆCENAS perceiving by his temper at that time, that he would condemn many of them, and not being able to approach him by reason of the crowd, immediately wrote these following words, *rise up executioner*, on a piece of paper, and threw it into his lap; which AUGUSTUS observing, he instantly rose up without sentencing one of them. Thus he, whom the world implicitly obeyed, as implicitly obeyed his friend. And when that friend was no more, he as sincerely lamented, as he now revered him, and with the greatest reason: for, sensible as he was of the

the value of such a friend while he enjoyed him, the loss he sustained by his death, must have added new force to his conviction of it. For the dignity of conduct, which, while MÆCENAS lived, he so gloriously maintained, he was not always able to maintain afterwards. AUGUSTUS was not AUGUSTUS, when MÆCENAS was no more; for too great a portion of the wisdom of the Emperor, was buried in the grave of the friend. But still it will be recorded to his everlasting honour, that, while he had a friend, he could treat him as a friend, and could pay that regard to wisdom, which is wisdom's due.

BUT in no character, whether Prince or Peasant, does friendship appear to so great an advantage, as in that of JONATHAN. In him we meet with a disinterestedness not to be equalled, and a fidelity not to be surpassed. In him all the graces of the mind, and all the virtues of the heart, shine conspicuous. And well might DAVID say of him; *very pleasant hast thou been to me.* But to do justice to so much excellence, exceeds my abilities: I shall therefore proceed to make a few observations on DAVID's gratitude, when he came into power.

INGRATITUDE is by all allowed to be one of the worst crimes, that do not actually come

come under the cognizance of the law. Even those who are most guilty of it, are unanimous in it's condemnation. Of all the depravities that pollute the heart, this is one of the basest; and the misery it occasions to mankind, is as insupportable as it is general. No instrument of death gives deeper wounds. It penetrates the inmost soul. And what peculiarly aggravates the evil we sustain from it is, that it poisons the wounds it gives, and renders them incurable. Nor is there any thing more generally fatal to society, than the effects of it upon the human mind. It chills and benumbs the soul, stops up the avenues of benevolence, and destroys the vital force of all those generous principles, which were implanted in it by the hand of nature. It cancels confidence, and creates suspicion; it detaches mankind from each other, and promotes an universal selfishness. But to reproach us with the baseness of this odious enormity, we need only be sent to the brutes, whose nature, however meanly regarded, is superior to the admission of it. Even the ox and the ass, animals stupid to a proverb, too evidently shew, that, in this respect, they are of a temper less ignoble than man. For this reason they are selected by the prophet, to upbraid, by their example, his degenerate countrymen with their ingratitude to almighty God, whom he introduces as thus speaking; *I have nourished and brought*

brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know; my people doth not consider. Even creatures, led only by sense and instinct, will caress, love, and obey their benefactor; but mankind, with all the boasted prerogative of reason, will wantonly insult their best friend, and openly rebel against him that made them. Instead of being softened by kindness, they often seem only hardened by it in their ingratitude. The benevolence that subdues the savages of the forest, has frequently no other effect upon them, but to render them still more savage. And tho' formed, by their maker, but a little lower than angels, they often, by their actions, sink themselves beneath brutes.

BUT however common this ungenerous disposition may be found in the human race, it is not perhaps more observable in any order of it, than in those who are distinguished by some sudden or extraordinary elevation. It is not an illiberal remark, to say, that their conduct is often such, as if they regarded the change of their condition, a sufficient discharge from all former obligations. And they, who usually experience the greatest unkindness from such people, are the very persons, who have contributed most to their success. For such is the folly
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of mankind, that they cannot bear the reflection, that they are indebted for their prosperity or greatness, to any one but themselves. Therefore the sight of those, who have been their principal auxiliaries, is of course odious to them, as it reminds them of the support or assistance, which they have received from others. And we have too many instances of Princes, who, for this very reason, have made those, that had been the chief agents in advancing them to the throne, the first victims of their tyranny. Monsters of cruelty! But let us now proceed to the contemplation of a character as amiable, as these are detestable; a character, which is as great an ornament to humanity, as these are a disgrace to it.

DAVID's accession to power, so far from being stained with any acts of cruelty, oppression, or revenge, is distinguished by a torrent of the most pungent grief, even for that very person, who not only stood in his way to it, but actually fought his destruction. But the loss of his friend, he seems scarcely able to support; for the acquisition of a kingdom, he well knew, was little or no recompence for such a loss. Even a thousand kingdoms weighed against such a friend, would have been but dust in the balance. For his sake he could not only forgive, but even love his persecutor. The

cruelty of SAUL, was absorbed in the friendship of JONATHAN. The soul of DAVID seems now to know no other passion, but those only of love and grief. And the first act of his, that we read of, after he was made king, is to send messengers to those, who had done honour to their dead bodies, to signify his peculiar approbation of their conduct, and to assure them of his intentions to requite their kindness. So genuine and vigorous is his affection for these unfortunate Princes, that his grief upon the mournful occasion of their catastrophe, seems to have assumed every mode of expression. How highly picturesque of it, is his very pathetic elegy, composed, as it should seem, immediately upon his receiving an account of that melancholy event! *The beauty of Israel, says he, is slain. How are the mighty fallen!* He then proceeds, to give vent to all the enthusiasm of distraction; and even imprecates a curse upon the fatal mountains of Gilboa. And having justly celebrated the valour and heroism of these accomplished leaders, he concludes with a variety of such tender sentiments, as are strongly characteristic of his distinguished affection for them. *Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives; and in their death, they were not divided. Ye daughters of Israel, weep for Saul. I am distressed for thee, my brother.* The

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brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

BUT his affection for his friend, did not exhaust itself in unavailing lamentation for his death; but he distinguishes his orphan, altho' he might now be justly considered as his rival for the crown, with the most princely honours. The claims of the father had expired, with his life, upon the mountains of Gilboa; and DAVID, had he framed his conduct upon the cold and ungenerous maxims of worldly prudence, might have easily contented himself with only displaying the outward ensigns of sorrow usual upon such occasions, without raising his son to an elevation, which, as it furnished him with opportunities of forming connections and intimacies with the leading men in the kingdom, might have soon rendered him formidable. For though, by virtue of his engagement with JONATHAN, he was bound to shew kindness to his seed, he was not bound to raise him to a level with the first Princes. Besides, with respect to Mephibosheth, DAVID seems to have been entirely ignorant that there was any such person; and he would have had no reason to think that he had been deficient in the performance of his engagement, had he only shewn kindness to such of the family, as he had

any cognizance of, or to such of them as should, at any time be introduced to his notice; but his affection for his friend was not so torpid, feeble and inanimate; nor his political maxims so narrow, selfish and illiberal. No, so dear to him was the memory of JONATHAN, that, for his sake, he longed for an opportunity to distinguish any one of the whole house of SAUL, by his royal favour; and therefore enquired if there were any left of his descendants, to whom he might shew kindness; and when, by this means he had discovered a son of his beloved friend, who had hitherto lived in the greatest obscurity, he immediately, in opposition to the usual maxims of courts, granted him a princely establishment. He shewed not, in his conduct towards him, any thing of that artifice, jealousy, or suspicion, so peculiarly characteristic of little minds; but acted with an uniform generosity, frankness and affection.

To make a suitable provision for his dignity and independence, he restored to him the possessions of the king his grandfather, and appointed him a steward to superintend and cultivate them; but his society he could not part with. For the sight of MERIBOSHETH served daily to recall to his mind the fond idea of his beloved JONATHAN; and therefore he placed him among *those who*

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did eat at his own table continually. Besides, as his father was now no more, he considered it as his duty to supply that loss, and to be a father unto him, and therefore gave him rank among his own sons, that with them he might share his affection. With them he was to eat, and with them to associate. Nor would he suffer him to feel any other mortification, by the departure of the sceptre from his family, than must arise, only from his not bearing it himself. For while he made him sit among Princes, it was not upon the humble footing of a court dependent, but upon that of an opulent Prince, whose hereditary possessions were suitable to his dignity, and equal to his ambition. Illustrious monarch, and more illustrious friend, whose virtues add lustre to a crown, and do honour to humanity!

THE friendship of JONATHAN now blossomed in the grave, and his posterity gathered the fruit of it. How great was the love of JONATHAN; and how noble the gratitude of DAVID! For his friend's sake, he was a friend to his enemy, and a generous patron to his whole house. Unhappy ISHBOSETH, that instead of falling into the power of the sons of RIMMON, thou didst not fall into that of the son of Jesse! For then wouldst thou have found, at the
foot

foot of a throne, that peace and protection, which the full possession of it cou'd not secure to thee. Then wouldst thou have experienced *him* thy best friend, whom thou wert wont to esteem thy greatest enemy. To recall life is not in his power; but what will he not do, which even a Prince of thine own blood could have done for thee? He will avenge thy fall, execute thy murderers, and pronounce thee *righteous*, the noblest panegyric that can be bestowed on man. These deeds therefore shall pronounce *him* righteous, and worthy, from a shepherd, to become a king.

SERMON

(32)

S E R M O N II.

PSALM cxvi. 11.

*What reward shall I give unto the Lord for
all the benefits that he hath done unto me?*

GRATITUDE to God, in the most
comprehensive sense, may justly be
considered as including every act of piety,
every duty of religion. The man who is
properly actuated by this principle, will at all
ways endeavour to discharge every species of
obligation, which he conceives to be incum-
bent on him. It is therefore of the utmost
consequence to mankind; that they should be
rightly impressed with it. For to the in-
efficacy or the total destitution of this prin-
ciple, may evidently be ascribed the preva-
lence of vice and wickedness in the world.
It is at once the folly and misfortune of many
men, that they consider themselves as little,
if at all, indebted to God for whatever they
are, or whatever they possess; but rather re-
gard themselves as their own principal bene-
factors. Their enjoyments, comforts, or
conveniences, they trace to no higher source,

and ascribe to no other cause than their own management, skill, or dexterity; and it is only to nature that they think themselves indebted for all their bodily advantages and endowments. Thus nature and themselves are considered as the chief, or perhaps, the sole agents in securing them so many extensive benefits, so many wonderful blessings. But what is nature, or what is man, but the operation of Omnipotence, and the workmanship of God? For *in him alone we live, and move, and have our being*; and from him alone we derive both our present enjoyments, and our future hopes. To him therefore we owe, in return for these unmerited gifts, every act of obedience, every instance of love.

His claims upon us are as infinite as his goodness, and as boundless as his mercies. To these the most vigorous exertion of our gratitude can bear no proportion. But tho' it is not in our power to make any returns in the least degree adequate to the benefits we have received; it is yet evident they should extend to the utmost limits of our abilities. To do him indeed any real service, far, very far, exceeds our capacity, or even that of the first order of created beings. But we may at least faithfully endeavour to obey his will; and this is the only testimony of our gratitude, which he requires of us. This therefore

fore should uniformly be the measure of our conduct. By this we should guide our actions, and by this direct our ways. For in whatever instances we act contrary to the will of God; in whatever instances we violate this supreme law, in these we are ungrateful to him. All sin therefore is a species of ingratitude. And whoever opposes the divine will, whether by doing what it prohibits, or by omitting what it prescribes, is an ungrateful man. For he returns evil for good; and, as far as in him lies, resists his greatest benefactor. Were men duly impressed with a just conviction of their obligations to God, they would always endeavour to please him; they would always endeavour to be as virtuous, holy, and good, as he has commanded them. In his ways they would then delight, and not their own. For they would then be *lovers of God more than lovers of themselves*; and would therefore cultivate those tempers which are most agreeable to his nature, and pursue that conduct which is most conducive to his glory. In a word, they would endeavour, in all things, to be like him, and, as far as they are able, to *be perfect, even as he is perfect*.

Now it is extremely obvious, that, if mankind were properly actuated by this principle, what a happy revolution it would produce in their morals, and what a happy change in

their condition. That there is at present but little virtue in the world, is sufficiently notorious. Nothing is more commonly, or more justly lamented. There is scarcely any man of the least observation or experience, but would readily tell you, how few are to be trusted, how very few are influenced by any other motive than self-interest or self-gratification; and how base, vicious, and corrupt, the human race is in general. Nor is this mere declamation, but unhappily a fact too well founded, too stubborn to be disproved. And they who are not inclined to believe it, may easily be convinced at their own expence. For perfidy, fraud, and violence abound every where; and they who are not vigilant, will soon discover, that they have far less to hope for, from the integrity of mankind, than from their own caution. They will quickly perceive, that to do by all men, as they would wish to be done by themselves, is not the common maxim of the world. But if men would be grateful to God, it is a rule, from which they would never deviate. For it is a plain command of revelation, as well as a clear dictate of reason. And it is only in proportion, as the actions of men are governed by this rule, that they are really just or virtuous. And so essential it is to their reciprocal comfort, that where it is not observed, human society has far more of terror, than satisfaction in it.

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But the result of a well established principle of gratitude, would not be the production of one solitary virtue, or only of a few; mere justice or charity would not be the sole effect of it, but an uniform goodness and perfect piety. Were mankind therefore to regulate their lives on this comprehensive plan, their obedience to God would not be limited to particular instances; but whatever christianity requires, whatever humanity demands, they would endeavour faithfully to perform. The man, who is duly sensible of his obligations to providence, is at the same time no less sensible, how very inadequate a return, even by his best services, he is able to make for them. And when he has done all he can, he still wishes to do more, and, with DAVID, cries out in the fullness of his heart, — *What reward shall I give unto the Lord, for all the benefits that he hath done unto me?*

In discoursing upon these words, I shall, first, point out some of those benefits, which ought more particularly to excite our gratitude to Almighty God; and, secondly, I shall shew by what frame of conduct, and mode of expression, we are required to demonstrate the sincerity of this holy disposition.

THE first benefit I shall mention, as it is the first which we have all received from

God, is our creation. But here, perhaps, it will be objected, that since *man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards*, it is impossible that his existence can be a benefit to him. For if our entrance into the world, is only an entrance into misery, pain, and sorrow, where, it may be asked, is the advantage, where is the blessing conferred on us by our creation? And it may be still farther observed, that the more minutely we examine into the state and circumstances of man in this world, the more reason we discover, to regard it as our misfortune, and not our felicity, that we have received our being. For the prospect of human life never appears so disgusting, as when we take a near view of it; because then we perceive, that what before we deemed the most inviting scenes, are all delusive, and that their seeming beauty, is but real deformity. Thus many perhaps will be ready to argue, and thus to represent our case, and to delineate our condition; but admitting the picture to be really just, and no feature exaggerated; yet nothing is more certain than that our creation, if we are not extremely wanting to ourselves, will ultimately prove, as it was originally intended, an invaluable benefit.

But then we are not to form our estimate of this benefit, from the very imperfect view

view of our existence, which we are able to take on this side of the grave. It is as presumptuous as it is unjust, to conclude, that because we find ourselves wretched in this transitory state, it is better that we had never been born; especially when we have every reasonable assurance, that *these light afflictions, which we now suffer, will finally work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* In this world we are only pilgrims and strangers, who are daily travelling to their everlasting home; if therefore, in our present situation, we are but ill accommodated, it cannot be any just matter of surprise or complaint. For it is the common fate of travellers in general, to be liable to many difficulties, dangers, and inconveniencies. Indeed had our existence been limited to our present state, and we had nothing to expect beyond it, we should then have been able to form a more competent judgment. But as the present stage is only, as it were, a prelude to our real existence, our present determinations can, by no means, be decisive. The most we can pretend to say, if we are to judge wholly from our own experience, is, that if we are never to arrive at a happier condition, than any we have as yet known, we cannot help wishing that we had never been created. But formally to pronounce, from so inadequate an evidence, upon the merits of the question in it's utmost latitude,

latitude, is a proof indeed of our rashness and folly, but of nothing more. It would have been just as reasonable for the *Israelites* to judge of the fertility of *Canaan*, from the asperity of the intermediate road; as for us to judge of the state invisible, from the difficulties that occur in our passage to it. And it is only from the nature of this state, that a right estimate can be formed, of the beatitude or infelicity of our having received our being. And in this, we are expressly told by him that made us, such elevated joys and exalted happiness, await all those, who live agreeably to his precepts, as far exceed all human comprehension. *For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

ANOTHER very important benefit, which we daily experience at the hand of God, is our preservation. That we are all, every instant, exposed to numberless perils, we can, none of us, be insensible. Whether we are at rest or in motion, whether asleep or awake, whether at home or abroad, a thousand dangers continually beset us. All the elements are replete with death; and we have no less to apprehend from things inanimate, than from those which are endued with life. The pestilence by which millions perish, rides, tho'

tho' unseen, upon the wings of the wind; and we know not, any of us, but the next breath we draw, may prove our destruction. But tho' we had nothing to fear from dangers invisible, there are multitudes that we can perceive, which threaten us every moment. And what are we, that we should hope to resist their assault by any efforts of our own? By what caution can we elude it; or by what stratagem divert it's force? What skill, what dexterity of man, is equal to the task? Or who is endued with that might and strength, that can support the stroke, when it falls? How feeble, how impotent, when actually assailed, is the stoutest among mortals! Nothing indeed is more evident than the inefficacy of all human means to procure for us a moment's safety. To what then are we to impute our continual preservation; and our frequent deliverance, even when there appears scarcely a possibility of it? Shall we ascribe it wholly to blind chance, to the influence of the stars, or to the agency of friendly Demons? What then is chance, but a word without a meaning? For what proof is there, that even the smallest incident is the effect of mere chance? It is certainly no article of a christian's creed, and an infidel cannot maintain it. But are the stars the guardians of the sons of men? Can they afflict or relieve, protect or destroy them at pleasure? Or can

they interpose their influence in any one instance, beyond their natural and stated sphere? Can they even dispense one ray of light, to regions they were not destined to illuminate? Or are they not themselves evidently impelled by necessity, and subjected to laws which they cannot transgress? If therefore they *fight in their courses*, it is only at the command of their maker. And, as to the agency of demons, it is not true in fact that any one action, that was ever exhibited on the theatre of the world, could justly be ascribed to them, unless considered as acting by the permission at least, if not by the express direction of a Divine Being. From these therefore no aid, no support or assistance can be hoped for; nor indeed is there any other being, who can succour us in the hour of distress, but the supreme God. For he only is able to save and to destroy, to kill and to make alive; and as by him alone we were at first created, by him alone we are continually preserved. And therefore as we are all most deeply interested for our own safety, we must necessarily be all sensible of the importance of this blessing, and likewise of his goodness, who so graciously confers it; a goodness which cannot fail to excite the most sincere gratitude in every breast, in which the genuine sentiments of nature are allowed to operate.

AGAIN,

AGAIN the comforts and conveniencies of this life, are benefits which we derive from the same source. To our father which is in heaven, we are as much indebted for these, as we are for our being. Our life indeed is a complication of many evils; but through the mercy of God, they are greatly alleviated. For our various wants, he hath kindly supplied us with various provisions; and with various helps for our various sufferings. If we daily hunger, we are daily fed; and if we are faint with thirst, or pierced with cold, the means of relief are commonly within our power. There are few regions, in which the necessities of life may not be obtained by due industry and care. Our natural and real wants are not very numerous; and thro' the bounty of heaven, may usually be supplied without any immoderate pains, or excessive difficulties. We are indeed sometimes exposed to the most pressing and fatal penury; but this too often is solely the effect of our own improvidence. The blessings of plenty are seldom wholly inaccessible, altho many times they are suffered to lie uncultivated. The earth is not reluctant to produce; nor the seasons to cherish; but we are sparing of our labour, and therefore become perhaps the victims of a calamity, which it was in our own power to avert. And to all our other exigencies, *the giver of every good and perfect gift*; has been no less

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attentive

attentive in the distribution of his blessings. For this end he has endued, as it were, every part of the creation, with some property conducive to the benefit of man. To heal our wounds or relieve our aches, in every clime and soil, trees and plants, roots and flowers, most liberally offer their voluntary aid. Nor are there perhaps scarcely any pains, that we are doomed to suffer, for which some lenitives, if not remedies, may not be found in the great store-house of nature. Our bodies indeed can, by no art or medicine, be secured from decay or dissolution; but their approaches may often be retarded, and their attacks rendered less violent. To effect this, both animals and minerals as well as vegetables unitedly contribute. But to discover and apply their virtues, is the business of man; for tho' much is done by Providence, something seems generally left to be done by ourselves. But the accommodations, which God hath prepared for us, are an ample demonstration of his goodness, and such as, exclusive of any other motive, ought both to excite our gratitude, and engage our love.

BUT what are all these benefits, however in themselves great, or however important, when compared with that most stupendous one, our redemption by JESUS CHRIST! This as much surpasses all other blessings, as the

the soul, in excellence, surpasses the body. Fully to comprehend it, is more indeed, much more than we are at present able; but we know enough of it, to behold it with the utmost wonder, and to regard it with the warmest affection. After all the explanations that can be given, the wisest among the sons of men must confess, that all he can now perceive of it, is, as it were, *thro' a glass darkly*. For the redemption of man, is, even by an inspired Apostle, called *the mystery of godliness*, and *an hidden mystery*; which, tho' revealed to us by the gospel, is only revealed in part. For *the wisdom of God*, and *the power of God*, are subjects far too wonderful for our limited capacities to admit or entertain of them any adequate idea.

It was the felicity of our nature, that we were created after the image of God; that our common parents, tho' appointed for a season to inhabit the earth, were no less innocent or righteous, than those more exalted beings, who were destined to surround their maker's throne; but it was our misfortune, and the source of all our wretchedness, that *man being in honour* continued not in that happy situation; but even before he could fully inform himself of all the extent of it's beatitude, no less foolishly than wickedly forfeited that bliss he vainly sought to enlarge. For a trial of his virtue, he was en-

joined only one plain command; but was threatened with death in case he should violate it. The penalty he soon incurred by the fatal transgression, and involved not himself only, but his whole posterity, in the unhappy consequences. That we are indeed responsible for his guilt, is probably what few in the present age will admit; but that we are the children, not of innocent, but of fallen, ADAM, none can deny. What then is the inference, but that we inherit the infirmities and corruptions, that were entailed upon our nature by his transgression? What these are, we all of us unhappily experience. Of this at least we cannot be insensible, that if we were to be judged by the tenor of the covenant first made with ADAM, by which unfinning obedience was made the condition of immortality, we must all perish. For where is the man that can say, that can truly say, that he has never violated the divine commands? Where is that righteous, that perfect man, that has always obeyed every precept of his Maker? This surely no one can pretend, or, I believe, will pretend, that is influenced by truth, or guided by reason. By this covenant, therefore, we must all have died. For tho' the justice of God requires us to believe, that ADAM was endued with sufficient power to keep it; yet we too plainly feel, that our strength is not equal to the task. To rescue

us, therefore, from this wretched condition, in which death seemed to be our inevitable portion, is the glory of the MESSIAH, and the felicity of man.*

BUT by what means was this to be effected? not certainly without a more merciful covenant. And this was established in virtue of that atonement for sin, which our Saviour, out of his infinite goodness, was pleased to undertake, and, in the fulness of time, to make for us, by the sacrifice of himself. And now, tho' we are not capable of that

* How nobly and beautifully does our sublime poet, Milton, write on this subject, in his Third Book of *Paradise Lost*, line 269.

He with his whole posterity must die,
 Die he or justice must; unless for him
 Some other able, and as willing, pay
 The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
 Say heav'nly Powers, where shall we find such love?
 Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
 Man's mortal crime, and just the unjust to save?
 Dwells in all Heaven Charity so dear?
 He ask'd, but all the heav'nly choir stood mute,
 And silence was in Heav'n;—on Man's behalf
 Patron or intercessor none appear'd,
 Much less that durst upon his own head draw
 The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set.
 And now without redemption all mankind
 Must have been lost, adjudg'd to Death and Hell
 By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
 In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
 His dearest mediation thus renew'd.

finis perfection required by the first; we
 are capable of those milder conditions, which
 are offered to us by this second covenant.
 Rigid obedience, as it is no longer in our
 power, is no longer insisted on as the terms
 of our acceptance, but sincere repentance
 for our past transgressions, and a faithful
 endeavour to avoid the repetition of them,
 is allowed, for our redeemer's sake, to sup-
 ply the place of it, and to entitle us to that
 bliss and immortality, which were forfeited
 in ADAM by the fall. To procure for us
 the inestimable benefit of this merciful dis-
 pensation, *the Prince of peace, the great*
captain of our salvation, was pleased to de-
 scend from the mansions of glory, into the
 habitations of wretchedness; and to assume
 that nature in which sin had been com-
 mitted, to render it an offering for sin. For
 verily he took not on him *the nature of angels,*
but that of the seed of Abraham. Even he,
 by whom the worlds were made, who was ap-
 pointed heir of all things, and who, being in
 the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be
 equal with GOD, to accomplish this gracious
 design, took upon him the form of a servant,
 and was made in the likeness of man; and
 having thus humbled himself to the con-
 dition of man, became obedient unto death,
 even the death of the cross. Even he, I say,
 who, from eternity, had dwelt in light inac-
 cessible, at the right hand of power, who was
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the express image of God, and the brightness of his glory, submitted to all the miseries of mortality, and became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, to qualify himself to expiate our guilt, and to give us an example of the most consummate virtue, that we might follow his steps, and walk in all purity and holiness, even as he also walked. For he surely, as the Prophet saith, was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. He was despised and rejected of men; he was oppressed and afflicted, and, to conclude the tragedy, was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; that by means of these bitter sufferings, he might bear our griefs, and carry those sorrows, to which our sins had exposed us. For the chastisement of our peace was upon him; because the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all; and with his stripes we are healed. How great, how wonderful, then is this instance of the divine goodness! What an amazing condescension, what astonishing love, and exalted mercy, are here exhibited by our saviour in the accomplishment of our redemption! Well may we cry out, with the psalmist, *what is man, O Lord, that thou art thus mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou so regardest him?*

THE means of grace are another most invaluable benefit conferred on us by Almighty God. To promote and facilitate our progress in

in our christian course, many helps are given, many rules are enjoined us; but as these are various and extensive, I shall only mention a few of them. Of all the helps which we receive from God, to do him true and laudable service, and to live soberly, righteously, and piously in this present world, the aid and inspiration of his holy spirit are the first and most considerable. For by him we are moved and animated to every good work, to every righteous purpose; and by him we are strengthened and supported in the pursuit of every virtue, and in the discharge of every duty. --- Again, as the love and favour of God, are only to be obtained by an earnest and sincere endeavour to obey his will, the scriptures, which are an express revelation of that will, are obviously, therefore, one of the principal means of grace. In them all that is required of us, both as men and christians, is contained; and by them we are instructed in every branch of our duty. They illuminate our path thro' this world, and open to us the most awful prospect into futurity. They exhibit the clearest view of all the just objects of our hopes and fears; explain to us our truest interest, and direct us to the most certain method of securing it. They furnish us with the wisest maxims and most perfect rules for the government of ourselves in every possible condition; and teach us both how to live and how to die. But however conducive

cive they may be, in themselves, to inform our minds, or influence our wills, however *profitable for doctrine, reproof, or instruction*, it is evident they can be of no farther real benefit to us, than as we make a right use of them; than as we *hear, read, mark, and learn* what they teach, *so as inwardly to digest it*. The possession of them, like that of any other talent, is only a blessing when it is duly improved. But the proper application of this means of grace is of the greater moment, as the knowledge of so many others is inseparably connected with it. Indeed some particular instances of our duty, some of those ways by which we may recommend ourselves to God, the mere light of nature perhaps might suffice to point out to us; but it is only that of revelation, which can fully inform us how we may hope effectually to *grow in grace*. It is the peculiar prerogative of the holy scriptures, to be a compleat system of all that is necessary to be known to make us wise unto salvation; to be alone able unerringly to instruct us, how we may advance *unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*.

I should now proceed to take notice of the ordinances instituted by our blessed Saviour, and of several other means of grace, of the utmost consequence to our growth and improvement in it; but my present limits

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will not permit me. Those, however, I have already mentioned, ought to be alone sufficient to impress us with the deepest gratitude; as likewise should that hope of glory, which both nature and revelation conspire to excite in us. But I must now hasten to my second proposition, which was to shew *what reward we should give unto the Lord*, or by what frame of conduct or mode of expression, we should demonstrate our gratitude to him, *for all the benefits which he hath done unto us.*

GRATITUDE to man implies not only the most cordial thankfulness, but likewise a return of the same benefits that he hath conferred, or of any other within our power. For man may assist or relieve man, and that frequently in that very instance, in which he himself hath been relieved or assisted. But as God is infinitely self-sufficient, independent, and omnipotent, and therefore cannot possibly stand in need of any thing that we can do, our gratitude to him must necessarily exclude the idea of a formal return of benefits, or of our serving him in any manner, by which he himself may receive any real good, or immediate advantage. We may be indeed, and are required to be, thankful to him; we are expressly commanded to bow down, with the most profound reverence before him, verbally to acknowledge his goodness, solemnly to praise him for his mercies, and

and to magnify him for all his works: but to return him a single benefit is not in our power, and therefore is no where enjoined us. — If therefore we are not able to do the least good to him, who has done so much for us; we are evidently the more strictly bound, to attend to all other ways and means, by which we may demonstrate to him the sincerity of our gratitude. — Particularly to note, and distinctly to consider each of these, would necessarily lead me to treat of all the various duties incumbent on us, both natural and evangelical; to select, therefore, and point out a few of them, is all that I can at present attempt.

Beloved, says the Apostle, *if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* To this conclusion of the Apostle, I intend chiefly to confine myself in the sequel of my discourse. And the first instance of brotherly love, or mutual benevolence, and reciprocal affection, which I shall here recommend, is that of promoting each other's spiritual welfare. But how little; how very little, is this to be expected, where people are so extremely regardless of their own, as we commonly see them? Before we can hope therefore, successfully to inculcate this indispensable duty of promoting the salvation of others, it seems highly requisite that we should all be reminded how much it imports us, *with fear*

and trembling, to work out our own. For unless we properly love ourselves, which we can only do by thus caring for our souls; unless we are truly our own friends, we cannot be friends to others, nor do them that good, even tho' we really wished it, which is obviously our duty; especially as one principal means to benefit mankind, is to set them a good example. Here then we should begin to preach to the world, and to endeavour their conversion by the holiness of our lives, and the uprightness of our conduct. For a sincere regard even for the welfare of others, as well as for our own, requires that we should order our conversation aright, that we should walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven. When we thus live ourselves in strict conformity to the laws of God, we may, with the more propriety, as well as the more efficacy, bid others go, and do so likewise; which is the next proof, it is incumbent on us to give, of our love to our brethren.

We should therefore be careful to instruct one another by precept, as well as by example. We can have no real regard for any man's salvation, whom we know to be vicious or profane, and seek not to reform by every possible means, from which we have any hope

hope of success. If advice and exhortation have no weight; if no art of persuasion has any influence; we should, where we can, use discipline and reproof. But tho' we should *always be zealous in a good cause*, and should never suffer ourselves, by vain apprehensions, to be intimidated from our duty;—yet *the wisdom of the serpent* is perhaps never more necessary, than when we are engaged in the work of reformation. For no savages are half so formidable as mankind, when they have given themselves up to the dominion of their lusts, and the tyranny of their passions; when, *being past feeling*, they riot in sin with a *seared conscience*, and commit *all iniquity with greediness*. We should therefore be cautious not to *cast our pearls before swine*, as it will only bring destruction upon ourselves, without any way benefiting those, whom we endeavour to reclaim. We must not however suffer our caution to degenerate into cowardice. Prudence and discretion, as well as fortitude and zeal, have their bounds, which they cannot pass, without losing at once their existence and their name. And, *if the will of God be so*, it is certainly far *better that we should suffer in this world, for well-doing, than incur punishment in the next, for the neglect of it*. But since mankind, in the last stages of corruption, are thus dangerous and intractable, we ought evidently to be the more diligent to *exhort*
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one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of us should be hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin.

Vice, in it's infancy, may often be suppressed without much difficulty. The man, who has wandered but a few steps out of his way, may easily be prevailed with to return to the point, at which he at first deviated. The distance is but small, and therefore may speedily be retraced. And as the error, as yet, requires but little trouble to correct it, the temptation to continue it, is not powerful. Therefore to reclaim those, who are thus circumstanced, who have made but a short excursion from the paths of virtue, is an easy task; and the strong probability of success, is a most animating motive to attempt it. For merely to be told that they are in an error, is alone sufficient to make some people rectify it. As soon as they perceive they are in the wrong, they are convinced of their danger. They are instantly alarmed, and instantly change their direction. All the powers of nature are as yet vigorous and unbiaised. Reason retains it's force, and conscience it's integrity. There are therefore no sooner appealed to, but they accuse, admonish, persuade and prevail. This therefore is the time for us, when men begin to draw back unto perdition, most effectually to oppose their fatal progress; for

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now we have good grounds to hope, that *our labours of love, that our exhortations, reproofs, and admonitions, will not be in vain.*

BUT we are not to confine our attention to those only; who have already *forsoaken their first faith*, who have actually swerved from the way of righteousness; but should be equally diligent to caution those, who as yet stand, to *take heed lest they fall*, and to exhort them to *hold fast their profession*. We should often remind them of the danger of vice, tho' but once indulged; and point out to them it's fatal tendency to corrupt the heart, and blind the understanding. We should explain to them the fertility of sin for the production of sin; and shew them the propensity of the passions, when once suffered to controul reason, totally to subject it. And lastly, we should faithfully admonish them of the extreme difficulty of returning from the abyss of vice into the pale of virtue; a difficulty so very great, that the prophet, the more forcibly to alarm us, represents it as altogether an impossibility. *Can the Ethiopian, says he, change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* Thus we should endeavour to perswade those, who have hitherto walked *circumspectly*, who have as yet kept themselves *unsported from the world*, to continue

continue their vigilance, to preserve their faith, and to *hold fast their integrity.*

NOR is this all; but as the faithful guardians of virtue, we should raise, for its protection, all the bulwarks we are able; of which an early education in the principles and practice of it, is obviously one of the most important. For what we learn earliest, we usually retain longest. It is therefore SOLOMON'S advice, that we should *train up youth in the way they should go; because, when they are old, they will not depart from it.* There are indeed, we cannot but own, too many instances of those, who have been peculiarly happy in their education, that have yet afterwards *turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them, that have made shipwreck of their faith and a good conscience,* and have become as vicious, profane, and abandoned, as the most profligate that ever disgraced humanity. But this only proves, that, in spite of every advantage, some men will be wicked, vile, and despicable. For the benefit of a pious education is too evident to be disputed; as it is notoriously the nature of all habits, whether good or bad, to obtain a force and permanency, in proportion as they are early acquired; because the customs we are inured to in our childhood, become generally a kind of second nature.

nature. They are as dear, as they are familiar, to us. For the actions we are then used to, we perform with a facility which gives delight; and we therefore repeat them often, that we may often enjoy it. And thus, by frequent repetition, they become so familiar to us, that we do them, many times, when we are not sensible of it; we do them, as it were, by necessity. For the will is no more concerned in the production of them, than it is in the vibration of the pulse, or the circulation of the blood. If therefore the force of habit is so powerful; if the influence of custom is so very great; we ought certainly, as far as we can, to give religion all the advantage of them, by *bringing up youth*, as we are commanded by the Apostle, *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

BUT we are not merely to *train them*, as it were, mechanically, *in the way they should go*; but we should teach them to act upon principle which is the only conduct worthy of rational creatures. We should carefully instruct them in every part of their duty; and fully inform them in the nature of that *faith, which was once delivered unto the Saints.* We should teach them what to chuse and what to avoid, and point out what is beneficial, and what injurious to them. We should explain to them the tendency, nature, and
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consequences, of every species of actions, of every mode of conversation. We should lay before them the wretchedness and deformity of vice, and the beauty and felicity of virtue. We should impress them with just notions of God, and enrich their minds with the most enlarged views of all his attributes. As they grow in years, we should continually assist them to grow in wisdom; and from the darkness of infancy, we should gradually lead them into the open day-light of confirmed manhood. In every season, in every stage, we should feed their minds, as well as their bodies, *with food convenient for them*. As their reason opens, and their capacities enlarge, we should diligently inculcate on them, *precept upon precept, and line upon line*, as the Prophet expresses it; as by this means we may hope, by degrees, to bring them to think justly, and to act rationally.

NOR should we confine our attention only to our own children, or to those more immediately under our care and direction; but should benevolently extend it to all others, as far as we are able. For this purpose, we should do well to encourage and promote those public seminaries, which are often the only means, by which the poorer classes of mankind can hope to receive any useful instruction in their childhood. These are charities,

rities, which cannot be too strongly recommended, as it is well known, that the brutality, corruption, and debauchery of the lower orders of society, is owing to nothing more than to the shameful neglect of their education. How little soever it may be in our power to reclaim those, who are already hardened in wickedness, or are grown grey in sin; yet we may certainly contribute much, by early instruction, to secure such from ruin, as are hitherto uncorrupted. If therefore we find it so hard a task, to reform the present generation, let us be the more diligent to guard the next from following their example; and let us be as truly zealous to prevent the infection, as we experience it difficult to subdue the disease.

BUT tho' it should be our first care, to benefit mankind in respect to their souls, we ought not to be less attentive to the welfare of their bodies. For *if God hath so loved us*, as to bestow on us the means of relieving the necessities of our brethren, we ought certainly, in gratitude to the author of these blessings, to apply them to the use for which he hath conferred them. It is not left to our choice, in what manner to dispose of any of those talents, which we have received from Providence. Our extensive wealth or large possessions, were not given us either to gratify our passions, or sooth our pride;

pride; but to enable us to assist the distressed, and succour the indigent. *If therefore a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and it be in our power to supply their wants, it is incumbent on us immediately to do it.* Many, we know, there are, who are ready enough to practise the frugal duties of exhortation or reproof; but yet would not part with any thing in charity, however urgent the occasion, or worthy the object. They love themselves too well, to love any one else in a degree that would be, in the least expensive to them. And they have not generosity sufficient to do by other people, as they would be done by themselves. If they have humanity or honesty enough, to wish their neighbour well, they dare not go one step further; they dare not actually to relieve him, or give him any assistance. *The mammon of unrighteousness* is far too dear to them, to part with any portion of it on such terms. But the religion pure and undefiled before God, dictates a very different conduct. *The royal law*, as the Apostle calls it, *commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to give him the most solid proofs of it, of which we are capable.* It commands us liberally to give alms of such things as we have; to be always ready to do good, and to communicate; for with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.

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BUT thus to benefit our fellow-creatures, by giving them those things, which are needful to the body, seems chiefly to be the duty of those, to whom Providence hath been more particularly bountiful. It is, however, required of the poor no less than the rich, to put on bowels of mercies, and to demonstrate their gratitude to God, by every act of benevolence in their power. For tho', as the Apostle saith, *silver and gold they have none to give*, or even perhaps to supply their own wants; yet it seldom happens, but they can by various other means, very essentially befriend their neighbours. It seldom happens but the poorest man living, may be rich in some species or other of good works. And I heartily wish that the want of abilities more effectually to serve mankind, were all we had to lament, and not, as is almost universally the case, the neglect of those we are possessed of.

BUT however vigorous we may be in our endeavours to promote each other's welfare, to benefit society, or reform the world; we should always remember that the discharge of this branch of our duty, does neither supersede nor diminish our obligation to an uniform discharge of every other part of it. For, as the Apostle saith, *whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty*

guilty of all. While therefore we assist man, let us honour God, and devoutly *offer unto him the sacrifice of thanksgiving*, both for the mercies which terminate more immediately in ourselves, and for those which we are enabled to extend to others.

John H. ...

John Smith

1950

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SERMON

S E R M O N III.

JOHN viii. 11.

*Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee.
Go, and sin no more.*

THIS was the kind reproof, which our blessed Saviour gave to the woman taken in adultery, and who was brought to him by the insnaring Scribes and Pharisees. ---In considering of which words, I shall endeavour to shew, *first*, The subtlety and partiality of that crafty people to their *own sex*, as well as *sect*; *secondly*, The wisdom and clemency of our divine Master towards the unhappy criminal; and *lastly*, That mercy is above sacrifice, which I hope will be an encouragement to us to imitate the bright example which the God of love hath set us.

FIRST, I am to shew the subtlety and partiality of the Scribes and Pharisees, in bringing this unhappy criminal to our Saviour. ---In the preceding part of this chapter we have the accusation of the Scribes and Pharisees for the proof of her crime.
And

And it was written in their law, that the testimony of two men is true; and so heinous a crime it was, that from the early ages of the world, it was an iniquity to be punished by the judges, and according to the *Mosaic* law the offenders were to be put to death. Of this the self-righteous, designing Pharisees would have availed themselves, with respect to this poor woman. But our blessed Saviour, who seeth not as man seeth, took no farther notice, than by stooping down and writing upon the ground, as tho' he heard them not.---And when, by their continued importunities, they in a manner compelled him to speak, he only said unto them, *He that is without sin amongst you, let him first cast a stone at her.* So this merciless and crafty people were caught in their own net. For we read, that being convicted by their own consciences, they went out one by one, leaving the poor delinquent to the mercy of her judge. But what must her accusers feel, at having their secret guilt thus openly detected by omniscient wisdom? They had brought a poor, weak woman to that bar of justice, which they themselves were forced to fly from; and that for a crime in which she must have had an *accomplice* at least, and perhaps a *seducer* in that accomplice, who had basely prostituted his superior abilities to beguile her with subtlety, and had enlisted into his service all the black
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catalogue of libertine arguments to lessen the horror of the guilt, and then serpent like had taken a cruel advantage of those weaker powers of mind and person, which he ought to have protected. Whether this monster was single or married, or how far his guilt was heightened, scripture does not inform us; but putting the most favourable construction upon it, heinous it must be, and yet such was the vile partiality of this people in favour of their *own* sex, that no mention is made of the *man*, never being brought to his trial. It would have been incompatible with the divine wisdom and goodness to have condemned the woman, the weaker vessel, and to have freed the man, who was made the *stronger*; but in human courts of justice it is too often seen, that by the fallacy of evidence, or the suppressing of it altogether, by that all-pleading fee the magic power of gold, the most criminal person comes off triumphant, while the less guilty are covered with ignominy and reproach. And it is well known too in how many instances the laws are lenient to their makers. Here indeed the most penetrating capacity can only say, *As we hear, so we judge*. It cannot discover the enveloped secrets of the heart. But it is well for us, that there is an omniscient judge, who sitteth above the clouds, that can. He it was, who upon this occasion manifested both his wisdom and

and his goodness. — His goodness in not condemning one whose heart he saw overwhelmed with penitential grief, fear, and shame. — His wisdom in avoiding that snare, which the insidious crafty Pharisees laid for him. — He well knew their hearts, and had had great experience of their hypocrisy, treachery, and proud conceit of their own righteousness. — They had before this time asked him to dine with them, only to have opportunity to cavil at his discourse, and take exception at his manner. And when he had, in great condescension, accepted the invitation to dine with a certain Pharisee, then he marvelled, that he had not first washed before dinner. Which veil of hypocrisy drew upon him and his sect, that severe rebuke and condemnation contained in the 11th chapter of St. LUKE. In short there was no end of the cavils of this contentious sect, that were continually lying in wait for words. Nor could the most benign actions of our blessed Master pass uncensured by them, even his permitting a poor female penitent to stand behind him, weeping. We may easily conjecture, that a consciousness of her crimes would not allow her any other attitude. Which leads me,

SECONDLY,

* This Discourse on Mercy, was suggested to the writer at a time when she had not the least thought of it's ever appearing

SECONDLY, To consider, the wisdom and clemency of our *divine Master* in his conduct towards these unhappy criminals, so very different from the general conduct of *man-kind* towards them, and of the Scribes and Pharisees in particular. --- To the first of these criminals, which gave occasion to my text, we find no severer rebuke than this, *Woman where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? --- Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more.* Thus did he at once defeat the malice of his enemies, and answer the end of his divine embassy, which was, *to seek and to save that which is lost.* Punishment here seemed as if it was his *strange work*, and mercy his darling attribute. *The bruised reed, he will not break, nor will he quench the smoking flax.* From which I

appearing in public. She was instigated to it by the conduct of our ever-gracious QUEEN to a certain Maid of Honour, in the year 1770; who had then lately acted an unwary part, in transmitting epistles, of criminal consequences, betwixt two persons of distinguished rank: but it was easy to imagine the Honourable Miss V. did not know the import of the letters conveyed through her hands: On account of which, as report tells us, some would have persuaded her royal mistress to have banished her her auspicious presence. But to the eternal honour of *England's Queen* be it recorded for imitation, that her Majesty, so far from being sway'd by vulgar prejudices against the unhappy Maid, look'd on her with an eye of pity in *Richmond Gardens*; and by a clemency, next to divine, restored her to herself and the Court: And at the same time exhibited the brightest pattern to her sex, of that mercy to each other, which it is the duty and glory of women to shew, where they can reasonably hope to amend by their lenity.

would infer how much more good would probably be done, to those of a true contrite spirit, that have either by the contagion of bad company and example been polluted, or drawn into error and vice, by sudden surprise or inexperience; which, tho' not of a capital nature, as in this case, yet bring them under such a cloud of disgrace, as to make them hang down their head as a bullrush, and go mourning all the day long. And if the divine goodness, that knoweth the thoughts of the heart, and considereth whereof we are made, will hold out the sceptre of mercy to these unhappy persons, and tell them, their sins, which are many, are forgiven them; shall we that are partakers of the same frail nature, (tho' perhaps we have not been under the same pressure of temptation and distress) can we, I ask, in charity to ourselves, deny them that mercy, which our heavenly Father is pleased to shew unto them, and which we ourselves shall one day want? If the delinquent is under the arrest of conscience, *that* is sharper than calumny itself, and renders such a one an object of the tenderest pity and compassion. Or if by false representations any may seem to have been stripped of their glory, and the crown taken from their head, yet will it make the crown of chastity shine with more resplendent lustre on our own brow, to treat them as Job's companions did him, in the days

days of his humiliation, when they followed him with undeserved reproaches, which vexed his soul, and broke him in pieces with words? No, no; it would better become us to be thankful that we have not been entangled with vicious habits, and overcome, and that we have been kept secretly in his tabernacle from the strife of tongues; and if we can be of any service to such as have been ensnared to tread the deluding paths of sin, let us fly to them on the wings of love, when they are ashamed to seek us, and offer them the friendly aids of counsel, the soothing of compassion, (that balm to distressed minds) and try to guide their steps in the way of peace; rather than add to their heart-felt sorrow by cruel recriminations, which gratitude to Heaven for our own preservation, piety, and christian charity, nay humanity itself forbid. Such a conduct can never derogate from the virtue and honour of worthy persons; for those who have most genuine merit or honour in themselves, have most to bestow upon others. To be admitted into their company, is to the unfortunate a letter of credit, and often affords a light to the feet of those who know not how to walk uprightly. And how honourable must it be to themselves to be constituted, as it were, the delegates of Heaven, who have also the sacred word of truth to assure them, that those, who turn many to righteousness

righteousness shall shine as the brightness of
 the firmament, and as the stars for ever and
 ever. They will not let the humble and
 contrite spirit sink into dependency, when
 it is in their power to revive it by cordials. —
 The compunction and pain of their own
 mind, they judge to be a sufficient punish-
 ment, and they will not add to the burden
 till it is made intollerable. For when the
 mind is weakened by fear and shame, and
 the perplexities of guilt, it is often rendered
 unable to form or to pursue wise and virtuous
 resolutions, without proper encouragement.
 — It is indeed a sad reflection upon women
 of character in general, that they are less
 severe to *men* for crimes of a licentious nature
 than they ought to be, by behaving towards
 them with every degree of complacency;
 while they treat those of their *own sex*, that
 have been drawn into error by the subtle
 wiles of men with the extremest rigor, by ex-
 cluding them from their company, and shut-
 ting them out of society, which severe treat-
 ment too often proves a fatal bar to returning
 virtue. — But can a good mind give encou-
 ragement to the *authors* of these complicated
 distresses in the *former*, or see *penitence*
 written in the faces of the *latter*, and not
 wish to restore them to the credit they were
 in in months past? How tenderly and ner-
 vously does our Saviour expostulate on this
 subject, in favour of the poor woman that
 stood

stood behind him weeping. This it seems gave umbrage to the Pharisee, that he should so mildly and familiarly converse with sinners. Our blessed redeemer does not seem to take particular notice of the disgust of the master of the house, probably from a principle of good manners, as being his guest. But addressing himself to SIMON said, I have somewhat to say unto thee, and then gave him the parable of the two debtors, and with great condescension appealed to him, which would love him most. SIMON answered and said, I suppose he to whom he forgave most. Jesus answered, Thou hast rightly judged, and turning to the woman, he said unto SIMON, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she bath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman since I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil, thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven her, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. Hard it was, that he who could have commanded all the Kings of the earth to have bowed before him, and might have taken place of CHUSAR upon his throne, and was ambitious of holding no greater levee than the children of fornicators should

should be called to an account by a proud
 Pharisee for his benign conduct in this par-
 ticular. — How similar to this is the parable
 of the Prodigal Son? What could induce that
 foolish wild youth to desire his portion of
 his father's substance, and to go into a far
 country, when doubtless he had every ne-
 cessary indulgence under his father's protect-
 ing roof. But then perhaps he had the pa-
 rental reproof with it, which his high li-
 centious spirit could not brook, and so he
 must needs desire to be master of his own
 fortune; which we find he was not long
 possessor of, for alas! he soon spent it in
 riotous living, and abandoned courses, so
 that he was brought in a little time to feed
 on husks with swine, and then, and not till
 then, he saw his folly. When he had reflected
 how much better his father's servants fared
 than he did, and when this wholesome severity
 had brought on a proper submission, I will
 arise, said he, and go to my father, own my
 fault against God and him, and being no
 more worthy of the tender appellation of *son*,
 will only desire to be as a *hired servant*.
 But no soon did his father see him, yet at
 a great distance, than, in spite of deserved
 resentment, all the fine feelings of parental
 pity broke in upon his tender soul, like a
 wide inundation of waters that were not
 to be restrained. With all the impetuosity
 of love he ran to meet him, seized him in
 his

his arms, pressed him to his bosom, sealed his peace with the kisses of his mouth, called for the best robe to cover him, a ring to adorn him, and shoes for his feet, and proclaimed a solemn festivity to his family. Upon which joyful occasion, the fatted calf was slain, and they began to be merry. And a noble reason he gives for his conduct, in his reply to his eldest son's expostulation upon it. *It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this my brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.* As much as to say, let a veil be drawn over the former faults of this poor wandering fugitive, once lost to me in the most afflictive sense of the word, and, poor wretch! lost to himself, an incumbrance and pest to society; but now that he hath such a contrite sense of his rebellious crimes, surely I ought to protect him; for by the divine favour and my encouragement, he may be confirmed in his present pious resolutions, and restored to the world. And if there be more joy among the celestial inhabitants, those pure spirits that now surround their father's throne, over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance; let not the superiority of an elder brother grudge me this testimony of parental affection to my new-born son. A day more joyful to me than the day of his nativity. Permit me to keep it as his birth-

day. And should the regularity of his future life answer the warmest wishes of a fond father, he can never supersede thee in my esteem. My heart is enlarged enough to bless you both. Thy steady course of piety and filial duty can never be rival'd by this new-made convert, nor shall it go without it's reward. Thou, my first-born, art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. --- From the foregoing parables allow me to observe, that lenity ought to be shewn to the *Penitent*, (and *such* lenity to *Penitents alone*.) Indeed many instances might be produced to shew it's efficacy where the difficulties have appeared numerous, and to *human* efforts insurmountable. But God hath promised to give his gracious spirit to all that ask it. And his hand is not shorten'd that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that he cannot hear. No, his power is infinite, and endued with this power from on high, what bands are so strong that we cannot break? But to imagine that we can safely converse and associate with the *profligate* and *harden'd*, is a proof of the deepest ignorance of human nature. It is an undoubted truth, and hath the sanction of an Apostle, as well as the universal experience of mankind to confirm it, that *evil communications will corrupt good manners*, wherefore *come out from among them, saith the Lord, and be separate*. It is indeed very dangerous to risk our own principles, by

by associating with those, whom we can neither do good to, nor receive good from, which is the great end of society. Can a man touch pitch and not be defiled thereby, or take live-coals into his bosom, and not be burnt? And it may moreover be asked, *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* Yes, at casual meetings they may, but not in the fervency of bosom-friendship. They cannot, where there is so strong a repugnancy of principle and sentiment. *Thought cannot meet thought*, nor from so barren a tree that never blossoms, nor even presents us with the fair leaves of hope, can we flatter ourselves that we shall ever gather the rich fruit of wisdom and improvement, or even rational entertainment. To associate therefore with such is a mere waste of time, at the dreadful risk of all that is interesting and valuable, and whatever appellation it may merit, it can never deserve the noble name of friendship.

THERE are those indeed of a different complexion, whom we ought to treat differently. Nor, while they are capable of being benefited by good and virtuous company, should they be excluded from it, as the greatest good we can do to our fellow-creatures is to be instrumental, under the direction and blessing of providence to their reformation; for which reason the bond of *communion* must in some sort be kept up and

maintained with them, that that of *humanity* may not be broken. Thus we find it was a common adage even among the Heathens, that *the wise man hates no-body, but only loves the virtuous*. The unhappy criminals may indeed, for a time, be so dead to all sense and feeling, that they must be treated as skilful surgeons do their patients in inveterate cases, where there is a fair outside, but the corrupted matter lies deep. If the artist would effect the cure, neither the lancet nor the probe must be spared. They must be cut till they are made to feel, and then, in due time, the healing application may be made, and it will have the desired success. -- This was the case with the *Royal Penitent*, for that enormous, altho' too *fashionable crime*, the *crying sin* of adultery. Many months were elapsed. A child was born, the heir of his disgrace. The deep wound was skind over, and DAVID did not feel, when the Prophet probed him by the parable, 'till he drew the lancet, (the word which cut him to the heart) and said, *Thou art the man*. Then DAVID own'd his crime, and said, *I have sinned against the Lord*. And NATHAN said unto DAVID, *The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die*. But tho' he did not suffer the law in his own person, his sin was severely visited upon him in the conduct of his children, for the sword did not depart from his house. -- And here let me

me reflect one moment on the complicated anguish of his mind, which broke out in the following words. *My heart is sore pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. — Horror hath overwhelmed me, and fearfulness and trembling are come upon me. — My soul is bowed down, reproach hath broken my heart. — Every night wash I my bed with my tears. — Deliver me from blood-guiltiness. O Lord, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. — For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. —* The worm of conscience so sharply bit him, that he even roared for very disquietness of heart.* And doubtless it was more condemning than the accusations of ten thousand witnesses. For nothing but the excruciating pangs which we are taught to fear in another world, could exceed his. He had been guilty of so atrocious a crime, in irreparably injuring, beyond the power of any

“What tongue can speak the restless Monarch’s woes;
“When God and NATHAN were declared his foes?”

“When every object his offence revil’d,
“The husband murder’d, and the wife deil’d,

“The parents’ sins impress’d upon the dying child;
“What heart can think the grief which he sustain’d?

“When the King’s crimes brought vengeance on the land
“And the inexorable Prophet’s voice

“Gave famine, plague, or war; and bid him fix his choice;

PRIOR’S Solomon.

any human atonement; a woman, whose character, in all other respects, appears to have deserved the highest esteem, both from the great respect which DAVID himself ever after paid her, and the reverence which her son SOLOMON shewed her upon all occasions, which greatly aggravated the offence against her. Nor did DAVID endeavour to extenuate it, but by earnest prayer and supplications to heaven, where his crime was recorded, sought pardon and forgiveness for the foul offence. — But, alas! what reparation could he make to her? The horrid crime could never be obliterated from the annals of Time. He well knew the mortal wound which he had given to female glory would be fatal to her peace of mind; and that however he might excuse her conduct to himself, the power of a monarch could never screen her from public reproach and shame, nor from the severity of divine displeasure. Let those who think light of DAVID's guilt, and make it the subject of prophane wit and ridicule, or shelter themselves under his example, seriously reflect upon its consequences, and the deep remorse, which followed it, and tremble. How one capital crime drew on another of the blackest dye, even the murder of a brave soldier that fought his battles. For in the first awaken'd anguish of his mind, what opiate could be taken to lay all asleep again, but URIAH's death?

death? And that did hurl him into a fatal lethargy, till he was indeed awaken'd by the prophet, who sounded an alarm of terror through all his soul, which made him roar for very *disquietness of heart*, and tho', as before observ'd, favour and mercy were shewn him, yet evil pursued him to his latest day.

But it is time to hasten to my third proposition, which is to shew, that mercy is above sacrifice. In the 6th verse of the 4th psalm, DAVID says, *There be many that say, what will shew us any good!* The prophet MICAH answers, *He hath shewn thee, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!* Justice is first required. That finer degree of justice, I apprehend, the breach of which is not cognizable by any human law, and with respect to which, therefore, we must be a law to ourselves; as we can be called into no court, but the court of conscience for the violation of it, and must be determined by the golden rule of *doing as we would be done by.* And where is the application of this rule more desirable, and the practice of this virtue more noble, than in giving protection to a wounded reputation, which is only blasted by the breath of censure, and facts are not proved against it. One would think that none but madmen and

fools

fools could delight in such brief sport, as to cast out firebrands, arrows, and death, for savage diversion. One would hope that any man endued with reason, should deem the character of another too sacred to worry in this manner, as he would very sensibly feel the malevolence of such a conduct, if retaliated upon himself, altho' he seems to invite it by setting such an example. But good words and kind interpretations are a very easy kind of charity, they will never impoverish the most indigent to bestow, and is oftentimes better received than costly gifts; for as SOLOMON allows, *a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving-favour rather than silver or gold.* Therefore reproach not a man that turneth from sin, but remember that we are all worthy of punishment. And if we shew no mercy to a fellow-creature, how can we expect it should be shewn to us? Therefore charity to ourselves should induce us to it, if not the love of mercy for mercy's sake; which doubtless is more pleasing to the GOD of mercy, than to bow before him with burnt-offerings, and with calves of a year old. For it is question asked, *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil?* No, saith DAVID, *Thou desirest no sacrifice, else I would give it thee, but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.* And he hath told us what is acceptable. *The sacrifice of God is a broken*

broken spirit. A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Thus it is that we should walk humbly with our God, conscious of our own defects, and how unable we are of ourselves to help ourselves, and that the whole of our salvation from sin and misery is of the LORD, who hath also commanded us to go and learn what that meaneth, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* No instituted religion was ever meant to supercede the necessity of moral conduct and purity of heart. And altho' the Jews laid great stress upon the ceremonial part of the law, yet, under the superior light which we enjoy, we know that *God is a spirit, and that they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.* The church of Rome may be deceived with expiations of this kind, but this will not do with God. And what can we think of that religion, which will not allow salvation to those of a different persuasion? The good and great bishop Tillotson says, that he does not wrong them, by representing them as inquiring after this manner, shall I go before a crucifix, and bow myself to it, as to the High God? And because the Lord is a great King, and it is perhaps too much boldness and arrogancy to make immediate addresses always to him; to which of the saints or angels shall I go to mediate for me, and to intercede on my behalf? Will the LORD be pleased with

thousands of pater-nosters, or with ten thousand of ave-mary's? Shall the host travel in procession, or myself undertake a tedious pilgrimage? Or shall I list myself a soldier for the holy war, or for the extirpation of Hereticks? shall I give half my estate to a convent for my transgression, or chastise and punish my body for the sin of my soul? No, our religion does not require any costly sacrifices, nor any such painful severities. For as the wise son of SIRACH justly observes, *He that keepeth the law bringeth offerings enough. He that taketh heed to the commandment offereth a peace-offering. He that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour, and he that giveth alms sacrificeth praise. To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord, and to forsake unrighteousness is more than whole burnt-offering and sacrifices.* Above all these, therefore, we are commanded to put on *charity*, which is the bond of perfectness. Let us then consider the frailty of our nature, and not presume upon our own strength. Let us be tender of our neighbour's reputation, and not needlessly expose it by rash censures. This conduct will plead for us in the day of our own distress, (and who can be secure, that such a day shall never come upon him?) with a silent, but an all powerful eloquence. Let us all then endeavour to imitate the example of our blessed Saviour, who, tho' he himself was without sin, neither

was

was guile found in his mouth, yet was always most ready to put a favourable construction on the misconduct of others. Then thro' his divine grace and intercession, we may hope for that benediction in the great day of audit, *blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

SERMON

S E R M O N IV.

ECCLESIASTICUS X. 18.

*Pride was not made for Men.**

NEVER was pride more mortified, or humility more exalted than in the days of our blessed Saviour: *Learn of me,* says he, *for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* The Jews were disappointed in their expectations of a MESSIAH by the meanness of his appearance. No *Ashatic* pomp or eastern splendor attended the Prince of peace, refulgent only in his father's glory, and his own god-like virtues. He had no honours to confer; no high places to promote his followers to. *To sit on his right hand and on his left, in the kingdom of his father was not,* as he told the ambitious

• As our church has allow'd the Apocryphal writings to be publicly read for edification, on account of the many excellent moral observations contained in them, I have therefore thought myself sufficiently authorized, in treating upon a moral subject to introduce it with a Text out of the writings of the wise son of SIRACH: which tho' not canonical, I presume to hope may be justifiable.

ambitious mother of ZEBEDEE's sons, *his*,
at that time, *to give*: and a child was
brought to his disciples, to represent by it's
docile disposition, and instruct by it's free-
dom from all aspiring thoughts, that PRIDE
WAS NOT MADE FOR MAN.

LET us trace human nature back to that
helpless state, and ask what has the infant
to be proud of? Tho' he is the son of the
greatest monarch upon earth, and paid all
royal honours as such; yet he comes crying
into the world, breaths the same common
air (if that privilege is allowed him) with
the meanest of his father's subjects: and,
notwithstanding the guards that may sur-
round the gate, has no better human pro-
tection than the feeble arms of a woman,
and indebted to the nourishment of her
bosom for support: and tho' born to be the
head of a nation, and the neighbouring
Princes may be expected to treat him as their
equal, yet the head of that tender body is so
weak, that it oft-times must rely on the nurse's
art to keep it steady: and could the smiling
infant be sensible of it's prerogative from supe-
riority of rank, yet is there any thing in this
pourtrait for the royal babe to be proud of?
And this humiliation, this imbecillity of na-
ture, the son of GOD himself submitted to.
He left the right hand of his father in the
celestial mansions to take our nature upon
him,

him, to be born of a woman; was laid in a manger, and voluntarily suffered for a series of years all the indignities that his inveterate enemies could suggest, for a life of obscurity and poverty could be clouded with: was content as is supposed, to follow the mean employment of a carpenter; and never sought to take a place among the great men of the earth, except when his heavenly father's business called him to it. The honours he rejected and the contempt he bore, were to shew that pride was not made for man; and to leave us an example that we should follow his steps.

I HAVE shewn that there is nothing in infancy to be proud of. And what is there in childhood? When it comes to be blest with the dawnings of reason, oftentimes the very first exercise of it's awakening faculties is to draw it into mischief; for we are as naturally prone to evil, as the sparks are to fly upward. It is not an observation of yesterday, when passion takes the lead, what bad effects must follow. Encouraged by personal strength the vigorous boy looks with disdain on his competitors: till reason brings him back to school, to civilize his nature and to improve his capacity. How jejune an employment to the sprightly youth is the tedious attainment of languages, arts, and sciences, till he has gained a taste
for

for mental acquisition, which perhaps he never may; or if he does, the gradual light of perception, we know, dawns very slowly on the human mind. Is this period of life devoted to severe instruction a state to be boasted of?

AND when he has thrown off the shackles of discipline, and gained the ascent of childhood, what has the stripling to boast of more than the boy, except that he is not under the tuition of masters, and his passions are more arbitrary and unconfined? Or, if the self-governing principle will sometimes contend for the sway, what conflicts does it not occasion with the impetuous youth, *who brooks not the controul of the vicegerent within him?* No; he has enlisted himself under the banner of pleasure, and will acknowledge no other sovereign. She presents him with intoxicating bowls, of which he drinks deep, 'till his senses are lull'd asleep; and when he awakes out of his lethargic dream, he finds his faculties enervated, his substance diminished, and his reputation blasted. But this he is too wise to learn, 'till, as Solomon tells us, *a dart strikes through his liver, and he hasteth as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.* He may not, perhaps, be able wholly to forget the admonitions of his parents or friends; the pleas of conscience will sometimes be heard

heard; and good resolutions may sometimes be formed: but the allurements of the world, the enjoyments of sense, the torrent of fashion, and the prevalence of ill example put in the world's scale, will too often make *his goodness to be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away.* This revolting nature is most pathetically lamented by the Prophet HOSEA, in the 11th chapter and 1st verse. *When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt.* How under the humble similitude of a nurse, does the great God of Israel say! *I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love, and I was to them, as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.* And how tenderly afterwards does he lament the back-sliding Israelites! *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* But though the Most High thus pleads in his favour and declares, *he will not execute the fierceness of his wrath towards him;* what have our modern youth to do with the expostulations of scripture? They boast of their freedom; and what has freedom to do with restraint? Tho' St. PETER tells them, *while they promise*

mise themselves liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage. But these notions of St. PETER are far too antiquated to be attended to; the eye of the mind is darkened; and is this state of intellectual blindness a state to be boasted of?

AND what succeeds? The bold intrepid man, who carries wisdom in his head, intelligence in his look, and strength in his arm: made to face danger, and encounter with the business of a bustling world; or what is more, made to understand all mysteries and knowledge. Though he is endowed with the eloquence of a Demosthenes, the oratory of a Cicero, the patience of a Socrates, or the wisdom of a Solon; though he is now in the full career of human glory, yet within a few years, he will be weary of this whirl of business; this high tide of honour may break down its banks to shew us, *that man being in honour is compared to the beasts that perish.* Can there be a more degrading comparison, a more humbling circumstance, than that he, whose penetration and sagacity fathomed the depths of human policy; whose Babel-towers of ambition reached almost to the heavens, must yet, by the royal psalmist, be likened to the brutal part of the creation? How mortifying this to human pride! Can we like this picture? If not, let us extend our views to

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the last stage of human nature, and see how we shall like that.

WHEN the man reverts again into second childhood, and has outlived all his enjoyments; when he cannot hear the voice of singing men or singing women; when the melody of musick, the charms of rhetorick, wit, and vivacity, are to him like a tale that is twice told. The ears grow dull of hearing; the eyes, that pierced with a look more sagacious than that of the quick-sighted eagle, that could with a glance molest the tranquillity of their beholders, by inspiring them with irresistible love, are now become so lifeless and sunk in their orbs, that they will not afford light enough to guide the possessor about his chamber: and yet his genius and excellencies might have been such, that he was regarded as a bright luminary in every active scene of life, and a lamp to the feet of others.---But now, that hand, which was the right hand of strength, and power, extensive in agency, quick in dispatch, eminent in dignity; that hand, which, as a late celebrated pious author observes, “among the
“ Egyptians was the symbol of strength,
“ among the Romans was an emblem of
“ fidelity, and among all nations may be
“ looked on as the ensign of authority, as it
“ not only represents but ascertains do-
“ minion over every creature,”---is but an
arm

arm of flesh, which in old age is often emaciated and hangs down as feeble and useless as the infant's, scarce able to support the food to the mouth. — But besides these natural imbecilities of old age, it often happens, as Elihu instructs Job, chap. xxxiii. 19, 20, 21 verses, *that he is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat: his flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out:—*and this as he tells us, *that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.——* And tho' we may not arrive at this low ebb of languishing nature by course of years, yet when the afflicting hand of Providence touches us, the most athletic constitution must bow: We all know that a sickly youth makes an early old age, and then how poor, how contemptible seem all those vanities that fostered the pride of our better days! How vain will human happiness appear, when the Almighty for the exercise of our patience or other virtues, shall think fit to try us, as he did his servant Job, and from the summit of honour and riches shall bring us to a dunghill and a potsherd! Before this awful dispensation of divine wisdom he tells us, *his glory was fresh in him, the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy: The young men* reverenced

reverenced his presence, yea, the aged arose and stood up. The eye and the ear gave attestation to his merit; and the reason he gives for this is, *the invincible force of virtue and integrity. I put on righteousness and it clothed me, and my judgement was as a robe and a diadem.* Yet, when for the proof of his integrity his fortune was reversed, and from public honours, and the esteem of the people, yea, of princes themselves, he became their song and by-word: when his domestic happiness was laid waste by the loss of children, and other important deprivations; and his person became, as it were, a spectacle of distress, and so loathsome, by the inveteracy of his disease, that they that did see him did flee far from him: how earnestly did this good patient man himself wish for death as a refuge! yea, how was he moved to choose strangling rather than life! -- And though we may not have his accumulated distress to grapple with, yet how wearisome is old age to those who have been engaged in active life, their happiness increasing in proportion to their being useful members of society. -- And yet we have shewn that to be a state not to be proud of; much less this, when our sun declines, and our shadows naturally lengthen. And should it be asked us in this last period of life, as it was good old Jacob, *How old art thou?* might we not reply as the patriarch did to Pharaoh, after he had given in the number of

his

his days. *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.* It was a monarch's question, and therefore needs no excuse.

But, perhaps, it may be objected, that hitherto we have considered human nature only in its most humble and depreciating circumstances; we have not taken into our account the pride of royalty, the power of beauty, or the distinctions of learning and science. Well, let us briefly consider these three, and see which of them will entitle us to pride.

How unavailing was the royal state of Nebuchadnezzar, when his greatness extended to heaven, and his dominion to the ends of the earth! While the empty boast was in his mouth, *Is not this Great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* The scripture tells us, a voice from heaven declared, *the kingdom is departed from thee.* And it farther informs us, that *he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.* But when his understanding returned to him, then *he praised and extolled the King of Heaven; and acknowledged that all His works were truth, and His ways judgement; and those that walk in*
PRIDE

PRIDE *He is able to abase.* But yet so hardened was the son, that he would not take warning by his father's example, till the hand-writing on the wall came out against him, and his kingdom was rent from him and given to the Medes and Persians. — But though the stately monarch does not provoke the Divine Arbitrator of heaven and earth, by such daring impiety and idolatry as these princes did, yet how little ease or security is there in the possession of a throne? Though the ascent to it be by as many noble steps, as to that of king Solomon; though it be made of ivory, and overlaid with pure gold, will it tread more soft and pleasant than the grassy turf? Will the resplendent lustre of a crown secure the head, which is encircled by it, from pain? or will the sycamore homage of a people, who to-day cry Hail, and to-morrow, Crucify, be any guard against the numberless diseases that assault the human frame? Will public adoration avert inevitable calamities; will it allay the scorching burnings of a violent fever; the excruciating pangs of the gout; or the emaciating decay of a flattering lingring consumption? — Will the sumptuous farce of ceremonious state soften the complicated care a wise sovereign has for his people? Though he can command fleets and armies, can he command the affections of his subjects? How often will they revolt upon the slightest occasion, even when the mitre and

and the coronet bow before him in meek-
 loyalty! How repugnant to ease is it to be
 loaded with gems; nor will the Tyrian dye
 of the glowing purple, the rich sable, or va-
 riegated ermine, the pageantry of royalty,
 have any charms for his god-like mind, who
 thinks he has the welfare of a kingdom to
 answer for*, the charge of which he looks
 on in so sacred and awful a light, that it
 leaves less tranquillity in his royal breast,
 than may be found in the meanest of his sub-
 jects! For to be crouded with applications,
 which, perhaps, power or justice cannot an-
 swer; and tired with popular acclamations,
 as if he were God and not man, and at the
 same time by those, who neither fear God
 nor honour the king; to have all his actions
 noted, as it were, in a day-book; to have
 every pleasant or benevolent effort interpreted
 as intellectual weakness; or on the other
 hand, the strict administration of justice to
 be

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- "What is a king?—A man condemn'd to bear
 "The public burthen of the nation's care;
 "A throne surrounded by a servile crew,
 "Prompt to abuse, and in detraction loud;
 "Abroad begirt with men, and swords, and spears,
 "His very state acknowledging his fears:
 "Marching amidst a thousand guards he shows
 "His secret terror of a thousand foes.
 "In war however prudent, great, or brave,
 "To blind events, and fickle chance a slave:
 "Seeking to settle what for ever flies;
 "Sure of the toil, uncertain of the prize.

PRIOR'S Solomon.

be deemed cruelty and barbarity, prove how difficult it is to sway the scepter, or draw the sword to please a nation. Or supposing the prince on the throne should be as happy in the affections of the people, as ever the most favored monarch has been in the zenith of his glory; what are all these air-blown bubbles of fame to a mind that considers how much soever he is *now* the flattered *Idol* of a court; though he can boast his lineage from a long line of kings and heroes, yet he is but a mere mortal man, and must die as such: and when his remains are consigned to the gloomy vault, "he must quarter arms with the meanest reptile," and be a companion for such; and all that he can claim of his vast domains, are a few feet of earth to conceal a decaying corpse. Here ends the mortal story. Will not the humbling view of this reverse of royal state, preserve the most illustrious sovereign from pride?

THE Power of Beauty falls next under our consideration; which is allowed by the best judges to be generally a greater trouble than blessing to the owners; as it makes persons more conspicuous, and subjects them to continual flattery from men, who pretend to set a much higher value on it, than such an accidental advantage can deserve. Their admirers too often suffer their reason to be dethroned by their passion, who exalt the possessors

lessors of beauty into heathen deities; and
 when by false adulation they have inspired
 them with an undue esteem for so transient
 a good, as the regularity of features, or the
 hue of a complexion, then they triumph
 over the weakness of their understanding; a
 greater share of which than common is ne-
 cessary to persons distinguished for their form,
 as well as a greater degree of divine grace,
 and human vigilance, to elude those subtle
 snares, which might never have been laid for
 them, had they been less attractive. And
 where is the freedom of those, who, if they
 are not betrayed by an intestine enemy, must,
 like centinels, be always on the watch, and
 never desert their post, for fear of the enemy
 without.

An unpolished gem will not arrest the
 eyes of the traveller, like the sparkling radi-
 ance of the diamond, which, by its own br-
 aze, lights the thief. Therefore, is not the
 state of beauty very unhappy? And confi-
 dered with its utmost advantages, is it not

A fading landscape painted upon clay.

The source of care, and idol of a day;

A tale, a shadow, a delusive sound;

That's lost with mourning, and with sorrow found.

Ask those, who have had the greatest share of
 it, and they will tell you, they would have
 been glad to have exchanged forms with the

O

homeliest

homeliest rustic maid: for then they might have been free from that incense of flattery, which had so much misguided their judgments; those darts of envy, the malignity of which had wounded their peace; and that admiration of the gaping throng, which gives more pain than pleasure to delicate minds, and takes off that perfume, which is generally thought to be so grateful to the vanity of females. For will it, can it bear the question, to ask what there is in this state of hostility and temptation to be proud of, except it be that their trials are greater, and perhaps their intellects weaker than the rest of their sex? Besides, can a reflecting mind be pleased with those strains of adoration, which are only due to the Supreme Being? What an abuse of language, when it is applied to any thing beneath celestial beauty! for if the angels are not pure in the sight of the Omniscient Being, but are charged with folly, how frail, how contemptible must human excellence appear: an excellence, too, that holds its tenure on the uncertainty of tomorrow: whose sun may not then enlighten those eyes, which are now sparkling with such sprightly vivacity, but only shine round a senseless corpse, till it is consigned to its kindred clay. Then where is our pride, where is our boast, when the worms are our sisters?

MEMORY.

MEMORY, learning and science, as mental qualifications, come next under our consideration. To begin with memory, that much-admired faculty of the mind, which enables us to look back to the days of childhood; and by its ideal powers makes every past pleasure present, which can bring our passions a second time on the stage of action, and help us to transplant the wisdom of others, and by recollection to furnish the store-house of the mind. Yet, when we consider it as a gift, it should excite our gratitude, but not our pride. Nor is it so desirable a gift, as may be imagined by those, who are not possessed of it. The steward, who hath much committed to his care, hath more to be accountable for. And such is the much-to-be-lamented depravity of human nature, that trifling and vain occurrences, encouraged by example, will often-times take the lead in precedence of superior sense and judgement. How difficult a task is it to make it only a sacred repository, and never to bring any thing out of it but what is meet for our master's use! Memory will maintain its distinction, and in spite of ourselves will remember the painful, as well as the pleasant in life: and though it can only be very severe to the guilty mind, yet the infelicities of human nature are such, that it would be a happiness to forget them: but that is a very difficult science to learn. The envenomed
stings

stings of malice and envy are so keen, that they will penetrate into the calmest soul. And when human vigilance cannot elude the blow, memory will oftener invade us on that quarter than it will assist us in recollecting the delightful moments of serene happiness. Besides, whatever are our attainments by this mental faculty, what is more treacherous to its trust? And shall we place a pride on what we cannot a dependence? Common sense forbids it.

GENIUS and Learning, indeed, dignify the man more than the ermin'd robe, or the staff of power; but though we could make the literary world our own, and could understand even all mysteries, and, like SOLOMON, could know even from the lofty cedar in Libanus, to the hyssop that groweth on the wall; and like that wise monarch, frail man, may be in the full meridian of glory, and acquisition of fame; yet ought he to consider, with him too, how vain that acquisition is, when it is not turned to its proper improvement by ingrafting practise on theory! How much vanity is annexed to reasoning pride! and what narrow limits are set to human wisdom? Then surely however extolled by short-sighted mortals, he will not exult, but remember his fun will set in the evening; nay, may withdraw its beams long before. It is but for Omnipotence to touch the linguist or the scholar with
a palsy,

a palsy, fever, or convulsion, and his admired capacity will either fall at once, or dwindle into the weakness of a child, or the foolishness of an idiot. But if misfortune spares us, and we have any real or fancied advantages above our fellow-creatures, let us compassionate others, and remember who it was that made us to differ, and that the Divine Power can as well take away as give. Pride would sit very ungracefully on the brow even of a Newton, a Boyle, or a Tillotson, much more of those who never heard of the names of those great and good men, who were inspired with that true wisdom that vaunted not itself, and is not puffed up: and shall we admire and not endeavour to imitate the sovereign grace of humility? Let us all consider, that whatever our endowments are now, there is a time hastening when we shall be stripped of all outward embellishments and honour, and summoned to stand at the same bar with the meanest beggar: let us then not be high-minded but fear, lest that beggar take pre-eminence of us there. Let us now reflect how inconsiderable are the boasts of nature, how weak its pride, when reason surveys with impartial eye what may be put in the scale against elating ourselves on the advantages of high-birth, riches, beauty or intellectual faculties, to the distinctions of which, a little time will put a period. But let the desires of our souls be turned to that, which is permanent.

nent. Our beauty must mingle with dust,
 as corruption is our original. Our riches may
 make to themselves wings and flee away: but
 if we consign them over to the next world by
 prudent charities, good example and good
 works, we shall be sure of meeting with an
 high interest for them. For we have the
 words of our Blessed Saviour to assure us, that
*he who giveth but a cup of cold water for his
 sake shall not fail of his reward.* Let us en-
 deavour to imitate Him in humility, and re-
 member that pride goeth before destruction,
 and a haughty spirit before a fall: that it has
 thrown down kings from their thrones, drove
 man out of paradise, and expelled angels from
 heaven. May their fall be our warning!

SERMON

S E R M O N V.

ECCLESIASTICUS x. 18.

Pride was not made for men, nor furious anger for them that are born of a woman.

THE two clauses of this verse, the former of which I have considered in a preceding discourse, have a closer connexion with each other than we are apt at first sight to imagine. For furious anger generally proceeds from pride; and pride from an intellect either naturally deficient, or else untutored in the severe school of affliction. The discipline of that school meliorates the soul, and brings it acquainted with those amiable kindred virtues, or accomplishments, wisdom and humility.

BUT though a furious man is not to be vindicated, yet some degrees there are of resentment not chargeable with guilt; and especially when the offence is committed not so much against us, as against religion and virtue.

tue: It becomes us then to shew, that wisdom is not destitute of zealous advocates, being, in this as in other respects, justified of all her children. Mean-time be the offence we resent ever so high, notorious and complicated, we must not dare to assume God's prerogative, who, condescending to speak after the manner of men, *declares vengeance to be his, which he will not fail to repay.*

IN the farther treatment of this subject, no one, I presume, will expect from me a logical exactness of method; but I shall endeavour to reduce and confine my thoughts to the following heads:

I SHALL consider, first, how far and in what cases anger is innocent; secondly, what provocations we ought to overlook as beneath our anger; thirdly, how injurious our anger, when excessive, will be to ourselves; and, finally, the serene happiness of that mind, which is enabled to overcome resentment, to despise affronts, and make the ill usage received from others turn to its own benefit.

I AM to begin with considering, how far and in what cases anger is innocent, or appears to be authorized by reason and religion; for that such cases there are, is beyond question, as St. Paul's caution upon this subject evidently implies, that anger and sin are not inseperable.

inseparable. *Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* Resentment is a passion in some degree necessary to creatures of our rank and in our circumstances; and, doubtless, had the exertion of it never been requisite, the great Author of our Being who doth nothing in vain, and who endued us with all our natural passions, as well as faculties, would never have given us this quick mental feeling. Indeed, had we been to converse only with meek, innocent and benevolent tempers, this passion might have lain dormant, or even been excluded out of our frame; but the various parts we have to act on this stage of life, often throw us among persons, whose souls, if I may use the expression, seem not to have been made of so fine materials, nor cast in so fair a mould. Their high affronts to their Maker, by their general violation and defiance of his laws; their making most impiously free with the sanction of his awful name, in order to deceive and injure a fellow-creature; and their daring imprecations of sacred vengeance on themselves and others, these horrid insults on Divine authority will vindicate any of us, at certain seasons, in imitating the sacred vehemence enjoined the prophet: *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.*

To hear the most serious, rational and noble pursuits in human life abused by profane infidels, who vend sophistry instead of argument, and give us ribaldry for wit!—
 O MOSES! how would thy righteous spirit, eminent and distinguished as it was for meekness, have fired at such base returns for the advantages of Divine Revelation! To what a transport of anger wast thou once raised by the idolatry of ISRAEL, when thou threwest out of thy hands, and brakest the tables of the law, though written by the finger of GOD! With what anguish and honest indignation wouldest thou now hear the scoffs of those, who despise their Maker and Redeemer, saying, as the Egyptian tyrant of old, "*Who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice.*" This sudden passion of the great prophet and legislator we never find imputed to him as a sin. The tables which he cast from him, and dashed in pieces, though of common stone, were, on account of their sacred contents, an inestimable treasure. They were not to be valued with the precious onyx or the sapphire, and the topaz of Ethiopia could not equal them. And yet the sudden passion which destroyed them, being excited by the view of a shocking act of impiety, was regarded at least as innocent.

NAY, we have the example of a much greater than MOSES to justify anger on such occasions,

occasions, even that of our Blessed Lord, who
 "cast out all them that sold and bought in
 the temple, and overthrew the tables of
 the money-changers, and the seats of them
 that sold doves, and said unto them [surely
 with great, though just asperity] It is writ-
 ten, *My house shall be called the house of
 prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.*
 Reproving the hypocrisy, the rapacity, the
 outrageous persecuting spirit of the Scribes
 and Pharisees, he rises to a yet higher pitch
 of sacred vehemence, reiterating that awful
 denunciation of Divine vengeance, "Woe
 unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,"
 at length adding, *Ye serpents, ye genera-
 tion of vipers, how can ye escape the damna-
 tion of hell?* The blindness of these men to
 the clearest evidences of his Divine mission,
 their insensibility to all the influence of his
 benevolent actions, and their ascription of his
 miracles to the Prince of Devils, being known
 by his unerring mind to spring from criminal
 prejudice and malevolence, justified the pe-
 remptory and severe manner of his reproof;
 and especially as he was possessed of such high
 dignity and jurisdiction. But we, having
 neither the knowledge nor authority of our
 Lord, should be very cautious and restrained
 in condemning our fellow-creatures. And
 yet surely, in cases wherein we are certain of
 the facts, and may hope to reform, or at least
 discourage vice and profaneness, our decent
 warmth

warmth in reprehending them is supported by our LORD'S example. *Thy money perish with thee.* With as little ceremony did St. PAUL inveigh against EUTHIMAS, when he set his eyes on him, and said, *O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness; wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? Surely to see fraud, perjury and oppression practised on the weaker and more unguarded part of our species, who thinking no evil themselves, have no suspicion of it in others, to behold these inoffensive persons taken in by deceit like birds in a net, must rouse the calmest and incense the coolest temper, awakening in their defence all the energies of which we are possessed. Or, to bring the affair home to our immediate business and bosoms; when in our own persons we suffer various provocations, and those, too, of the most irritating and insulting kind; when the shrill trumpet of defamation is sounded against us, and we become as it were the by word of our neighbours, or, as JOB expresses it, *the song of the drunkard*; when persons traduce us*

who

who are entirely ignorant both of our actions and motives; nay, when even those usurp the tribunal, and call us into judgement, who are determined not so much as to hear evidence in our favour; such inveterate malice is too affecting to the sensibility of the best hearts, not to strike out some sparks of resentment. But we ought not to permit our resentment to blaze out in the fury of revenge; for allowing ourselves to retaliate unjustly, we become almost as criminal as our enemies; and can never have received from them so great an injury as we then receive from ourselves. We may, indeed, convince them, that it is not a stock or a stone they have to deal with; and that if we patiently endure the ill treatment which neither integrity nor prudence can avoid, it is not from want of feeling, but from a sense of duty.

Doubtless it is very hard, that a pacific temper should prove an encouragement, or invitation, to ill offices. When regularity of conduct will not protect from the wounds of calumny; when even conspicuous and uncommon merit is attacked with the greater violence on the very account of its superiority, and the good it wisheth and endeavoureth to do, is sure to be evil spoken of; this, I acknowledge, is extremely grating to the sensibility of an honest mind. Yet still we ought to remember, that the wrath of man worketh

not

not the righteousness of God ; nay, what is worse, that furious anger throws a man off his guard, and leads him to work unrighteousness. It may, indeed, be impossible, on some occasions, to suppress the first emotions of anger ; but the rising flame may be soon extinguished by proper exertion ; and I hope what is involuntary in the case will not be imputed to us as guilt.

THAT we may increase our fortitude in such moments of temptation, let us recollect by what honoured name we are called, under whose banners we are enlisted, how patiently the captain of our salvation bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and that certainly the disciple is not above his master ; let us suppose that angels, and the spirits of the just, and even our great Leader himself, are spectators of the conflict, and waiting to see whether passion or reason will prevail. Nay, to render the scene more awful and commanding still, if resolution stagger, let imagination sound that solemn trumpet, which shall call us to our last account. Such methods will animate the good soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, who, thus armed with the shield of faith, will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.---Our antagonists of our own species may sometimes arrogantly pretend, that they are fighting God's battles ; but in vain do they make him a party in their quarrels.

quarrels. He disdains such unjust and furious champions, and will himself, in his own due time avenge the cause of the righteous, provided they faint not, and are not weary in well-doing, nor endeavour to wrest from him the prerogative of what he is pleased to call vengeance. *There is none that can deliver out of his band.—If he whet his glittering sword, and his hand take hold on judgment; he will render vengeance to his enemies.* And perhaps those wonderful promises made to the faithful under the Mosaic dispensation, may be applicable in some measure to persons of the same character under the Christian: *He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.—Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under thy feet.*

HAVING dispatched the first part of my undertaking, I proceed to shew, secondly, what provocations we ought to overlook as beneath our resentment.

AND here it is obvious, that when offences and injuries spring from ignorance, or however from very imperfect and superficial knowledge, they ought not to excite in us any violent degree of emotion. Numberless persons are destitute, not only of that penetration which is necessary for the solution of difficulties,

difficulties, but of the understanding requisite to form a judgment even on the plainest subjects. Their apprehensions of truth, rectitude, and prudence are extremely defective and confused; nor is there any thing they are less acquainted with than they are with themselves, the narrowness of their own capacities, the depravity of their own tempers, and the turpitude of their ruling principles. And now is it any wonder, that those persons should misconstrue the characters and conduct of others, who never understood their own? Ignorance, especially when owing to weakness of capacity, is worthy of commiseration, and not of anger. Ignorance and dulness will never candidly interpret the actions of benevolent and exalted spirits. The minds of the dull and ignorant are not a soil, in which to cultivate so generous a fruit as candor. Nothing is produced there but thistles and thorns; and to expect grapes from the latter, or figs from the former, would be no more agreeable to common-sense than to scripture. But surely we should not be furiously angry at not finding what we have no reason to expect. A wise man must certainly be superior to such weak adversaries, and will not suffer himself to be enraged at his fellow-creatures because of their mental imbecillity: For that would betray too great a complacency in the understanding, which indeed he may have improved, but did not bestow

bestow upon himself; and a deplorable want of gratitude to the Giver of all Good. Therefore, as I have already hinted, we should rather generously pity the weak intellects of our offending brethren, than suffer their offences to inflame us. Though they, in their censures of us and other treatment they give us, may not be right; we, in the indulgence of a furious anger, are undoubtedly wrong.

AGAIN, if the injuries we receive, apparently arise from inadvertence, we ought certainly to regard them as beneath our resentment. We ought not to be implacable towards injuries of this class, till we find that we ourselves are never off our guard, never are surprized into indiscreet and injurious deportment, nor have ever the least need of forbearance from our fellow-creatures.

Nay, more, though malevolence, as is often the case, be mingled with ignorance and stupidity, yet as it generally punishes itself, we should not permit the ill usage we receive from it, to have any great effect upon our passions. The silly falsehoods of the malevolent affect only their own characters; and they have not far to fall. For though such persons are dignified with the human form, their dispositions sink them to a level with the brutes; nay, with the worst of all brutes;

beasts of prey. Every thing liberal, useful
 and praise-worthy; all literary, moral and
 religious worth; all who are possessed of such
 endowments, though they do honour to hu-
 man nature, and are at once the ornaments
 and blessings of society, are regarded by ma-
 levolence and folly with contempt and hatred.
 These birds of night cannot bear the bright
 lustre of their superior virtues, and therefore
 meanly endeavour to draw an Egyptian veil
 over them, and are sure to depreciate what
 they will not try to emulate. A wise man
 never took the scorner's chair; but a wise
 man hath said, *A fool will rage and be con-
 fident.* But the rage of such men is impotent.
 If we are satisfied of the rectitude of our own
 hearts, what can we apprehend from the ma-
 lice of those around us? *If our hearts con-
 demn us not, then have we confidence towards
 God.* Far be it from us to become remiss in
 the duties of our stations, because of the
 weak and malignant censures of those who
 have nothing to do, or rather are inclined to
 do nothing, but to scrutinize the conduct of
 their neighbours. Though such defamers
 should be numerous, and indeed they are not
 scarce, they will be regarded by the man of
 fortitude as only the buzzing insects of a sum-
 mer's day. He will not permit even an army
 of such diminutive and insignificant beings to
 give him uneasiness, much less to retard him
 in the path of virtue and usefulness; which

would

would surely disgrace his reason as a man, and his profession as a Christian. The lustre of a truly good character is like that of the sun, which swarms of very contemptible creatures, may for a while obscure or conceal, but can never extinguish.

Let us now consider, thirdly, how injurious, our anger when excessive, will be to ourselves.

The text assures us, that *furious anger was not made for them that are born of a woman*; which I think must intend, among other things, that it is very detrimental to a race of beings so weak as the human. The comparative imbecility of the female sex, with regard to intellectual as well as corporeal force, seems to be generally acknowledged: And pray is the weakness of the mother an argument of strength in the child? I think not. But, not to lay too much stress on this reasoning from the mere mode of expression in the text; as furious anger is unworthy the rank, and unsuitable to the guilt of man, and much fitter for a beast of prey, (particulars on which I cannot at present enlarge) so to man it must be hurtful in an eminent degree. For let me only ask, doth not ungoverned passion violently exercise, fatigue, and in time diminish the strength both of body and mind? What can be more impetuous?

petuous? What a tumult in the countenance! What a fierceness particularly in the eye! What phrenzy in the intellect; and what convulsion throughout our frame! Fury renders our reason quite useless. It will agree to no proposals, listen to no argument, submit to no law. It refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, though charming ever so wisely. Passion is at least as blind as a mole, nor could the adder, were the ancient fable concerning it true, make itself deaser. When we are impelled by rage, nothing can stop our destructive progress till our strength be exhausted, and we have executed such mischief as we shall bitterly regret during the remainder of life. The cruelty we have acted upon others, soon recoils upon ourselves.

How pathetically doth good old JACOB lament the vindictive conduct of two of his sons! *Simon and Levi are brethren. Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret: unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united. For in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce: and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide aban in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* The royal and inspired sages, well apprized of the pernicious effects of outrageous passion, gives us admirable advice upon this head: *Make no friendship*
ship

ship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn of his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. To catch the contagion will, indeed, be the worst evil; but a long train of other mischiefs may arise from such company, which none but those who have experienced them can well imagine. The least accidental spark will immediately kindle such combustible spirits into a flame, which many waters cannot quench. To imagine that the fury of these lunaticks is to be asswaged by gentle words, would be almost to equal them in madness. All who consult their own safety, and are not pleased with living in a storm, must retire. To reason on such occasions would be reasoning with a whirlwind, and endeavouring, by eloquence, to stem the rushing torrent.

But as nothing violent can be of long duration, this thunder-storm will of itself at length subside, the impetuous and cutting hail-stones dissolve, the clouds retire, and the firmament begin to assume a clearer aspect. And now what a scene appears! For besides the outrage the furious man hath committed upon others, how miserable hath he rendered himself! What a wretch hath his passion left him! Good God preserve us from the dire infection. The strength of his arm and the volubility of his tongue fail him. The cheek so lately glowing with rage, is
sicken'd

sicken'd o'er with a deadly paleness. The eye, which was swollen with anger, and appeared to dart such destructive rays, is now sunk in its socket; and a kind of palsy succeeds the fever of the soul. Above all, the shame and remorse for having so far debased human nature, and produced such mischievous effects, must be highly distressing. But let us hear how the poet expresses it:

Our passions gone, and reason in her throne.

— I shou'd we see the mischiefs we have done.

“After a tempest when the winds are laid,

“The calm sea wonders at the wrecks it made.

When reflection again takes place, and reason hath regained her seat, perhaps the over-mettled and rampant passions may become obedient to the reins. But for the accomplishment of so great an effect, or before the man who hath been subdued by anger can recover the ground he hath lost, time must be allowed, the most painful compunction felt, and, before he can be at peace, such submissions made as will be mortifying almost to distraction. Well was it pronounced by a most accomplished and inspired king, that *he that is slow to anger is of great understanding*. Nor is the honour of subduing our passions less than the infamy of obeying them. According to SOLOMON, it is the most glorious conquest the human mind can obtain, and denotes the truest magnanimity. *He that is slow*

to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.

We are now, finally, to consider the happy serenity of that soul, which is enabled to overcome resentment, to despise affronts, and make the ill usage received from others turn to its own benefit. Here instances as well as reasonings may be of great use.

Of this generous spirit, and the tranquillity attending it, Julius Cæsar, though otherwise of a most exceptionable character, was a rare example. Though policy, no doubt, had a share in the direction of his conduct, he was frequently influenced by the noblest moral sentiments; nor was it easy by injuries, or even by ingratitude, to move him. Many were the instances of his clemency. It was customary with him to make his enemies his friends, either by privately seeking a reconciliation with them; or by inviting them to his table, and there treating them with the most honourable distinction. Though Cassius had given him great cause of resentment, he tells his friend, that "Cassius had made him great, having afforded him an opportunity of presenting him with his forfeited life." Nay, not contented with this degree of generosity, he raised the offender to the high dignity of Prætor. The serene and cheerful fortitude of this illustrious

ous man, which brings the instance home to this part of our subject, was exactly correspondent to the nobleness of his soul. When his friends recommended to him a guard, and several offered to engage in that service, he rejected their proposal, declaring "he had much rather die at once than always live in fear of dying." But perhaps few men have so thoroughly experienced the miseries of revenge on the one hand, and the serene happiness of clemency and compassion on the other, as the next Emperor, AUGUSTUS. "Being in Gaul, or as others say, at Rome, he received intelligence, that LUCIUS CINNA was forming a conspiracy against him. Particular notice was given him of the place, the time, and the manner of attack, one of the conspirators having turned evidence. Determined on revenge, the Emperor appointed a consultation of his friends; but mean-while reflecting that he was about to condemn a noble youth, innocent except in the present affair, and grandson to the illustrious POMPEY, he had a very restless night. He frequently groaned, and threw out expressions contradictory to each other. 'What! shall I permit my intended murderer to walk about in safety, while I myself am anxious for my danger? Shall the man escape punishment, who hath resolved in a time of peace not only to destroy a life, in vain attempted in so many civil

civil wars, and preserved in so many engagements by sea and land; but even to offer that life in sacrifice." For it was at a sacrifice that he designed to assault him. Then, after an interval of silence, he stormed with louder vehemence against himself, than before against CINNA. "If thy death be of importance to such multitudes, why dost thou live? Is there never to be an end of inflicting punishment and shedding blood? I am obnoxious to the young nobility, who whet their swords for my destruction. My life surely can be of little value, if such numbers must perish that I may be safe." At length Livia, his imperial consort, to her exalted honour, thus address'd him, "Will you take a woman's advice? Imitate the physicians, who, finding the usual remedies unsuccessful, try those of a contrary nature. By severity you have gained nothing. Let us now hath followed SCAURICENUS, MURMUR, LEPIDUS, CASSIUS, MURMUR, and EPISTOLUS, with others, whom I shall not mention. Make now an experiment, and see whether clemency will produce. Pardon CINNA. Being discovered he can no longer hurt your person, but your glory he may greatly promote." AUGUSTUS, rejoicing to find such an advocate in his wife, thanked her, countermanded the appointment with his friends, and sent only for CINNA.

NA, said he, When I found you in the
 camp of my enemies, I not only an actual
 but hereditary foe, I spared your life, and
 allowed you to enjoy your patrimony.
 You are now so prosperous and rich, that
 the conquerors may envy the conquered.
 At your request, I preferred you to many
 persons whose fathers had fought for my
 side, and bestowed on you the priesthood.
 But though I have conferred on you these
 obligations, you have resolved to murder
 me. Having discoursed with him more
 than two hours, he thus concluded, Well,
 CINO, the life which I once gave you as
 an enemy, I now grant you as a traitor and
 parricide, and from this day, let friendship
 commence between us, and let our only con-
 tention be whether I shall prove to have
 given, or you to have received your life with
 the better faith. Some time after, he of
 his own accord bestowed on him the consul-
 ship, complaining that he had not made so
 free as to apply for it; found him most faith-
 ful and friendly to the last; was left his sole
 heir; nor was ever after troubled with ano-
 ther conspiracy. And what think you was
 the result? Why, outward as well as in-
 ward tranquility. Now here, I will not as-
 front virtue by asking, what revenge could
 have been so noble; I only ask, what re-
 venge could have been so effectual.

But

But these are examples only of frail mortals and unenlightened heathens, who had great vices as well as virtues. For a perfect character let us inquire of the evangelists, and consider the life of our blessed Redeemer, who though subject to our sinless infirmities, was yet in a moral, as well as in other respects, the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person. With what serene patience did this Prince of peace endure the contradiction of sinners, and the insults of a rabble! His sacred head, which never sought his own honour, is encircled with a crown of thorns. His divine face, at once so expressive of majesty and benevolence, is spit upon by the miscreants who surround him. He even receives blows from the same herd of human brutes. His ears are wounded with bitter sarcasms, and the most cruel taunts. His dignity is degraded by the mock loyalty of his persecutors, being invested in derision with a purple robe, and for a sceptre presented with a reed. Yet, behold his serenity and self-possession! When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not. Nay, though he could have called to his aid more than twelve legions of angels, he suffered himself—is it credible? It is more than credible: It is certain—he suffered himself to be nailed to the accursed tree! and do you recollect in what manner,

when he hung there, he vented his indignation against his enemies? If you do, it must surely be with ineffable astonishment. *Forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

I MIGHT have called your attention to preceding instances of his truly divine clemency, which are worthy of the most serious notice. Particularly his rebuke to his disciples, and even to the affectionate St. John among the rest (so apt are the mildest sometimes to become vindictive and the wisest to be unacquainted with themselves,) when more from bigotry than zeal for him, they wished to imprecate celestial fire to consume the Samaritans, who, because their master was going to Jerusalem, would not receive him. *We know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* His calm reprehension of Peter's rashness, who cut off the ear of the high priest's servant; his miraculously healing of the wounded man, though one of the multitude who came to apprehend him; and his strong intimation in these words, *They who use the sword, shall perish by the sword*; that his battles were not to be fought with carnal weapons, ought never to be forgotten. And then the unexampled mildness of the reproof which he bestowed on the diabolical treachery of JUDAS, *Betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?* merits everlasting admiration. But surely,

surely, nothing equals that prayer upon the cross: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And how delightful must have been the tranquility and self-complacency of the soul, capable at such a time of such an intercession!

SENSIBLE I am, it is extremely difficult to attain the serenity of well-regulated passions in this imperfect state. The causes of perturbation are so numerous that they often take us by surprize. But we should place it to account before-hand, that to hope in a state of trial for an exemption from every thing which can ruffle the composure of our souls, is from the very nature of such a state unreasonable. We must like hired workmen perform our day's labour, before we can receive our wages. Were there no corrupt passions to combat, no temptations to subdue, where would be our trial, or how could we obtain the unfading wreath of victory? But there is no danger of our wanting exercise for patience, and fortitude. Our kind neighbours will supply us with abundance. And surely to find ourselves misrepresented and depreciated by the low dupes of falshood, and the slaves of self-conceit, will occasion our cheeks to glow with a painful warmth; and unless timely prevented, kindle rage in our hearts. It may sometimes become us, and be even our duty, severely to repress the insolence

tolerance of such revilers, and self-defence against their calumnies is at all times lawful; but we never ought to return their scurrility. For we read that MICHAEL the archangel, disputing with the Devil about the body of MOSES, durst not bring against even him a railing accusation, saying only, with a mildness worthy of an archangel, *The Lord rebuke thee*. Difficult, as I have already hinted, it certainly is, to be at once as wise as serpents and harmless as doves; never to be angry but with just reason; nor permit our resentment to carry us beyond proper bounds. Revenge is too frequently accounted sweet; but surely to the wise and religious, and to all whose moral taste is not dreadfully depraved, patience and forbearance must be incomparably sweeter. Revenge draws after it a long and black train of mischiefs, too long and too black for description; and what may be the dire catastrophe who can determine? To say the very least, a revengeful temper suffers inquietudes, to which the mild and forgiving disposition is entirely a stranger.

ANIMATED by such a spirit, we not only are exempted from the perturbations endured by the furious and vindictive, but compel our very enemies to be our servants, our servants with regard to our better interest, if they will not be our friends.

ANIMATED

ANIMATED by such a spirit, we resemble the inhabitants of Heaven, are prepared and attuned for Heaven ourselves, and must experience some anticipation or foretaste of the heavenly felicity. This blessed disposition, and the hope of that glorious state, supported the martyrs under all their sufferings, and, accompanied no doubt with unusual grace, endued them with a constancy, which filled even their enemies with astonishment. The Christians smiled on the various tortures, in the very preparation of which their persecutors were tired and exhausted. What are the little injuries we suffer, to the distresses and agonies which they underwent? Ought not we therefore, like them, to contemplate with an eye of faith that exalted world, where instead of envy, malevolence, detraction, insult, injustice, personal animosities, party contentions, and national wars, all shall be harmony and love? *There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest.* There the meek and forgiving shall be infinitely more than compensated for all the injuries they have suffered. There they shall be raised to that summit of felicity, which is stiled with an emphasis at present but little comprehended, *the joy of their Lord.* Thither, we are assured, the Prince of Peace hath long ago ascended, there he sits at the right hand of his Father in all the glory and majesty of Heaven, and is so far from being rigorous

figorous in marking iniquities, that he maketh intercession for all the truly penitent. Astonishing goodness! Inestimable privilege! Our very Judge is our advocate! If we are not wrought upon by the sacrificial sufferings, the example and intercession of our blessed Redeemer, so as to become placable ourselves, what can melt our hearts? If we forgive not an hundred pence, how can we expect to be forgiven ten thousand talents?

LET us cherish therefore the temper, and practise the duty here recommended, that we may experience the serenity and the blissful hope, which otherwise we can never attain. Bear up, O my soul, with firmness and patience, however thou art provoked or tried. Consider how fast thou art hastening to the period of this troublesome life. Though thou art tost here upon a tumultuous ocean, be not dismayed at the roaring of the billows. Land will be soon in view. Under the influence of divine grace, faith will preserve thee, and pilot thee into a blissful harbour. There (most transporting thought!) a convoy of Angels will be ready to attend thee, and waft thee to the mansions of everlasting joy and glory.

SERMON

S E R M O N VI.

Ecclesiastes, xii. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, &c.

THESSE words are an admonition left to posterity, as a legacy from the wisest of men; a conclusion drawn from unhappy experiences, that nothing is so proper, nothing so becoming our early years, as to quit the empty circle of worldly pleasures, and remember our Creator in the days of our youth.

Now to remember our Creator is to reflect upon him with delight—to preserve an habitual sense of his goodness in our minds; and to render him all that *reasonable service*, which is included in love—honour—and obedience. And sure, for these necessary purposes, no time can be so acceptable to our Maker as youth—when the affections are more powerful, the heart more susceptible of warm impressions, (and therefore should be of divine ones) than in the languid state

of decaying nature. Youth is the golden NOW, the glorious opportunity, which losing at present, we may lose forever.

IV. *MONUMENTS*
 BESIDES, there is no season so proper for man to bear the yoke as in youth; for then wisdom's ways will become habitual—*whole ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* And if we neglect to submit to the gentle restraints of religion in our youth, our burthen will inevitably be the heavier. And how shall we be able to support the weight, when we are tottering under the infirmities of old age?—Is it a becoming time to make a first address to the King of Kings, and to offer him our service, when our joints are palsied, our eyes dim, and our knees grown feeble?—as if our Maker was only to be complimented with the drags of mortality? Would a temporal Prince accept the service of a soldier in the last days of his life, who till that time had borne arms against him under his most implacable enemy? Would he not rather condemn him as a rebel, than accept him as a loyal subject, or reward him among his own faithful veterans?—Moreover, what an ungrateful return must it be, for all those ennobling distinctions, which man is endowed with above the rest of the creation? Alas! to what an unworthy purpose must his creation have been, that of a sensitive and reasoning Being—and how useless

less his being made a little lower than the angels; when he so abuses his faculties!

By such a conduct heaven is treated only as an hospital or a guard house; a place to fly to in the hours of distress, a shelter from the threatening storm. The reward of such vain confidence is fully shewn in the parable of the foolish virgins, who for want of a timely provision of oil for their lamps, were forever excluded the kingdom above. That we may avert their fate, let us all timely consider how precious we are in God's sight; and how solemnly he expostulates with us by the Evangelical prophet ISAIAH. -- Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard: My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful-hill -- and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes. -- And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up: and break

down the wall thereof, and it shall be troden down. — And I will lay it waste : It shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briars and thorns : I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. — For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant : and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression ; for righteousness, but behold a cry. God has been abundantly indulgent to us — has done his part in giving us improveable understandings, we must not then, on our parts neglect the culture of them. Shall a poor husbandman do more for the clods of the earth, to break and manure the soil, by rising early and late taking rest, than we shall for an immortal soul ! — Forbid it reason ! — We are not sent into the world to be idle. Our spiritual life requires of us as much labour as the natural one does of the husbandman, we are to break up the fallow ground of our hearts ; are to sow in righteousness ; then, and then only may we humbly presume, that we shall in God's due time reap in mercy. But if no mechanic art can be attained without a proper application and attention, is it reasonable to suppose that we can acquire the noblest reward of human industry, by slumbering away our senses on the downy bed of indolence ? Duly as the beams of the morning return the birds are up, to hymn their great Creator, and to reproach our unpardonable

able ingratitude and negligence. The contemptible ant, we tread under our feet, is a pattern of diligence; and we are directed to *consider her ways and be wise*. The bee also arises to condemn us by her industrious example, for being voluntarily chained down in a state of stupid insensibility, or the romantic vagaries of the brain. How little can we exculpate our guilt in this respect by the stale pleas of natural propensity, or irresistible somnolence; the sophistry of sloth!*

It is true old age and illness make their own apology, but the same allowances will not be granted to youth, no more than it will plead for the soldier when the trumpet calls to battle. Ah! ye votaries of pleasure and ease, who sport with time, and revel on

* Falsely luxurious, will not man awake;

And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy

The cool, the fragrant, and the silent hour,

To meditation due and sacred song?

For is there ought in sleep can charm the wise

To lie in dead oblivion, losing half

The fleeting moments of too short a life?

Total extinction of the enlightened soul!

Or else to feverish vanity alive,

Wilder'd, and tossing thro' distemper'd dreams?

Who would in such a gloomy state remain

Longer than nature craves; when every Muse

And every blooming pleasure wait without,

To bless the wildly-devious morning-walk?

THOMSON.

on the brink of eternity; (as if your only business were to dance away in giddy merriment, or pick up straw with seeds) when you know that you cannot call to-morrow your own: How will you be able to give up your accounts with gladness, should they that morrow be required of you? And besides this, how can you answer the expectations which the world has already entertained in your favour? A world, that has generally high expectations from youth; especially from such as have been so happy as to give early indications of great capacities. What tho' it may not be an easy task to perform, yet it is a glorious one to finish—to present their wishes, and answer the claims of our believing friends, by increasing merit. It is surely a kind of cruelty in us to defeat their noble expectations, and to oblige them to take up a similar lamentation to that of the Prophet, and say, *We looked for grapes from that fair blooming tree—it inspired us with hopes, that it would bend with its precious fruit to the hands of the gatherer, and make glad the heart of God and man; but how!—oh how! has it brought forth wild grapes!*—

BUT to rise higher than human expectations, how strongly must it provoke a just and jealous God, to take back the talent so ill employed, from him to whom it was lent, and to bestow it on him who may improve it

is better?—For if a man will sow nothing in his youth, what can he expect to reap in his age? How little does such a person deserve the gifts of reason, perception, and those other noble faculties of the soul, who uses all the endowments he is distinguished by to the dishonour of the beneficent donor?—and how unworthy to be trusted with such precious talents is a prodigal or a sluggard!—But now, on the other hand, if we are so truly wise as to employ all the powers of our souls and bodies in obeying and serving—that is, in *remembering our great Creator*, we are assured by sacred testimony that we shall be rulers over ten cities. Nay, what is of more importance to us than ten kingdoms we shall rule over our own minds, and bring our own hearts into subjection, and shall not be brought under the bandage of sin. For the soul having been early cultivated, good habits have taken root, and then there is no room for noxious weeds to grow, and the grand deceiver with all his wiles will not so easily prevail against our habituated and established virtue. His sophistry is in vain; we are not to be found on his ground. Tempted indeed we may be, for so was our Saviour himself in the wilderness; but he in the distress of nature resisted the various pleas of his subtle enemy, and then the Devil left him, *and behold angels came and ministered unto him*. Tempted we may be, forsaken we shall.

shall not be. And if sin do abound, God's grace doth much more abound to overcome and conquer it.---Let this then be our consolation; greater is he that is for us, than he that is against us.---We have a MICHAEL still to fight our battles, which in the old testament, is a type of him that shed his blood for us in the new.---In many parts of sacred writ we read, that the blessed spirits above, have executed the benign office of being guardians to us frail creatures here on earth: and that the mild Angel, GABRIEL, was detached from the High Court of Heaven, to comfort the afflicted Saints in former ages, with his consolatory embassies.---And why may we not alleviate the difficulties we have to encounter with in mortal life, in imagining that they are still permitted to preside over us, to comfort us in trouble, and guard us in danger? What can be a stronger motive to a firm trust and reliance on the mercies of our maker, than such pleasing contemplations?

TEMPTATIONS, therefore, we must ever expect as long as we continue in the warfare of life: but these resisted and vanquished, serve only to adorn our triumphs. It certainly gives virtue a new lustre to be sometimes exercised. For ABRAHAM would never have been called the father of the faithful, nor Job the most patient of men, had not their
different

different virtues have been put to the test. And God himself (boasting, as it were, of a man---the creature of his own work and power) gives this unerring testimony of the former, *For I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.* And of the latter he saith to Satan himself, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.* And there is no reason to think that DAVID was esteemed the man after God's own heart, for any of his great abilities, either in arms or civil life, but because he kept God's testimonies from his youth up, (one capital crime excepted, for which also he deeply repented.) For to an inflamed love, he added a most accurate knowledge of the divine law; and the importance of its sacred truths seemed frequently to absorb his whole soul:---hence it was that he broke out into that humiliating exclamation, *Who can tell how oft he offendeth?---Ob! cleanse thou me from my secret faults!* And what else is the ninth Psalm, but repetitions of his own

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own piety, and an exhortation to others thereto?

It has been observed that youth is a chusing, and often a fixing time: and, surely, if we make choice of religion first, as the governing principle of our actions, we cannot be hurt by a second choice. Things can never go amiss if we adopt the noble resolution of JOSHUA, *As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.* To enforce which pious resolution, I would most earnestly and repeatedly recommend the study of the scriptures, which can alone inculcate saving knowledge-----render us truly wise unto salvation---and cause us in a suitable manner, to *remember our Creator in the days of our youth.*

THERE is often a laudable emulation in the ingenuous mind of youth, to copy great examples. These have been found as eminent in dignified as in humbler stations. Our own history furnishes us with numerous patterns of this sort; of Kings and Queens who filled the British throne. Of EDWARD the Sixth; who when he was crowned and presented with three swords, to signify his triple power, declared that these could be of no effect, unless he could get a fourth, meaning the sword of the spirit; the word of God.

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He was the JOSIAH of his age; and is a bright instance, how soon even amidst the temptations of a court, grace may ripen a man for the celestial diadem. Nor was his successor, the Lady JANE GRAY less eminent for her solid piety, than for those graces of mind and person, which seemed to challenge a rivalship of excellence. While the schools of *Athens* had little to teach her, the love of God, and her bible triumph'd over all her human endowments. This it was that gave her a Martyr's crown! and led her early in life, from the church militant to the church triumphant; leaving behind her a name that reflects equal honour on her religion and her sex.

AND tho' she was not called to *suffer* for religion, yet the example of Queen MARY (confort to K. WILLIAM) was no less an ornament to it. The pious Bishop TILLOTSON attended her in her latest hours; and earnestly wished, that he himself might be found equally fit to die, when he should be called to his *long home*. Such was that charming Princess in the bloom of life!—The instances are too numerous for recital of heroic personages, distinguished by the gifts of nature and fortune, whom the flattering and splendid pleasures of their rank and station, could not draw off from the pursuits of early piety.

piety. So truly has it found *Kings for its nursing fathers, and Queens for its nursing mothers!* Why should I swell the bright catalogue with the examples on sacred record of JOSHUA, DAVID, or DANIEL; of SAMUEL, of TIMOTHY, and others!—they are too well known to need a recital; and will, it is hoped, prove, what their history intended, noble excitements of generous emulation to youth. The remembrance of our Creator, does not consist in costly sacrifices, or profuse expiations;—*behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams!* And it may be truly said of youth, that *now is its accepted time, now is its day of salvation:* when health is in its vigour—the faculties are active—and the intellects clear.

This duty is therefore peculiarly enjoined us in youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, in which we shall say we have no pleasure in them:—these I take to be the years of old age, in which we are incapacitated to receive satisfaction, from the circumstances which are the comfort and pleasure of youth. *I am this day, said good BAZILLAI, four score years old; and can I discern between good or evil? Can I taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men or singing women?*—No—he well know by experience the quick sense of those

those delights rapacious time had robbed him of!—Nor can we be pleased with those objects of sight that now entertain us, *when those that look out of the windows* (the eyes, those casements of the soul) *are darkened*; and in that advanced season of life nothing of all our former pleasures, will delight us, *because man goeth to his long home*. And can this weak enervated state of nature, be a time to begin so difficult a work as that of rooting out old habits, and planting new?—Is this a time to work a second nature in the soul, when it can scarce animate the machine to which it is united?—Surely repentance must be a most arduous task to be accomplished on a sick bed? When they who have been most careful, not to entangle their unwary companions in sin, but to *remember their Creator in the days of their youth*—when such come in view of eternity!—when they are going to be landed on an unknown shore!—when all their omissions and commissions stare them in the face,—ask these whether repentance be so easy a task, or so much in our own power as we commonly suppose it to be? With what difficulty then shall they obtain so divine a gift from God, who have plunged others into ruin by making them their associates in wilful and premeditated guilt? by leading them into the broad way of destruction, and by instigating them to those deeds

of darkness, which it is a shame once to mention among Christians. If, as religion teaches us, God will judge us, how dreadfully accumulated must be their punishment who have the sins of others, together with their own, to answer for? It were better for such that a mill-stone were hanged about their necks, and that they were drowned in the depth of the sea. Annihilation is too great a mercy to hope for. — heavy and tremendous is the sentence!

But if we endeavour to act up to a contrary character, in observing God's commandments, and *shall teach men so to do*: the oracle of truth assures us, *we shall be called greatest in the kingdom of Heaven*. In the great day of recompence, when God shall make up his jewels, those shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever. And what more has the divine Being who possesses all things richly to bestow, what more to promise?

At as! does not scripture amply instruct us that the wages of sin is death? — And who would be slaves to a master, whose wages will not keep him from starving? — Who would be factors for the infernal agent, who is daily in wait to destroy souls? — Or who that has once given up the government of himself,

himself, and thrown the reins on the neck of lawless passion, can say to his desires, *Hilberto shall ye come and no further?*—It is well known, that repeated acts form an habit, and habit is a second nature. Which strongly inculcates the importance of forming good ones. It is these that render life pleasant, and death easy. Not that I would be understood to imply rigid austerity, which is a disposition truly improper for youth. *Stand off, I am holier than thou*, is a language equally arrogant and unchristian; and what none but a self-seeking, tho' a self-condemning proud pharisee would use. For who made us to differ from the vilest of men? Nothing but the grace of God which seal-eth the faithful unto *the day of redemption*. Which awful period has by many pious christians been more desired than dreaded. For the renovating grace and mercy of Jesus disarms death of his sting, and gives him an angel's face. Tho' we naturally shrink from this king of terrors, whose universal power spares neither sex nor age, yet some have with exulting confidence, broke out in the exclamation of St. PAUL, *O Death I where is thy sting!*—*O grave where is thy victory!* Even when the ghastly monarch has been stalking towards them, they have laid hold on the promises of eternal life, and knew that the God in whom they trusted, and endeavoured

to serve from their youth up, would not forsake them in the hour of dissolution. He has promised for the sake of his Son, to blot out their transgressions, and not to remember their sins. And tho' we must pass through the adamant gate of death to enter the portals of heaven; yet, when once arrived there, all tears shall be wiped from our eyes! and for ought we know, we shall be welcomed on the immortal shores, by ABRAHAM, ISAAC, and JACOB; and be permitted to take place among those, whom most we knew, and loved on earth. These consolatory hopes can alone support the good man, to whom these reflections are familiar. But how can this reviving cordial, be administered with safety to those, who have neglected to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. I fear, but seldom. For whatever good resolutions may be formed at the last, they can only be resolutions; not corroborated by action. And is it not too often seen, in returning health, that the soul was more terrified by the apprehensions of eternal misery, than by real compunction for sin? And indeed in the languors of that weak state, it is enough to struggle with nature only, without the more important care of working out our salvation with fear and trembling.

Therefore,

*Therefore, be thou instructed, O Jerusalem !
lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee
desolate, a land not inhabited.* For as a great
divine of our church expresseth it, " Heaven
is not a place so void of inhabitants, that like
some new discover'd plantation it should take
in all the refuse and scum of mankind; no, as
desirous as God is of the salvation of all,
he will never so far prostitute it's sacred gates,
as to throw them wide open to such as only
fly there in the hours of extremity and dis-
pair. He hath no need of the sinful man :
And those celestial mansions are already filled
with thousands of angels, and arch-angels,
who are continually surrounding, with their
blessed hallelujahs, their father's throne."

To what has been said, I would only beg
leave to add a remark or two.

THAT we may certainly infer, heaven
would not be heaven to those, supposing
they could arrive there, who are not prepared
for it, and fitted by purity of heart. For the
joys of that place are only joys to the good
and virtuous, and to such as bear thither simi-
lar dispositions. For instance, can the vo-
luptuary or drunkard, please their vitiated
appetites in those blissful regions, where the
meat and drink of the inhabitants is to do the
will of their father ?

AGAIN, what entertainment can the sensualist find, in following the immaculate lamb wheresoever he goeth, whose base views upon the weaker part of the creation, in this life were only bounded by his power? It is a well known observation, "That there is but one Being in the universe, that can sport with the misery, which only his infernal artifice could create?" And who would lose the approbation of angels in heaven, and good men on earth, together with the plaudit of his own conscience, to be a tool in the hands of such a diabolical master? Who would risk his chance of happiness hereafter on a miracle of grace, for no greater triumph than that of deluding a fellow-creature here? which a pure and generous mind would think it his duty to protect, and not destroy! O, therefore, *that they were wise! that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!* and act up to the dignity of rational and immortal creatures, by *remembering their Creator in the days of their youth*, and not lay up store for bitter repentance. For, let it be remembered that men are to approve themselves at an higher tribunal, than one of their own erecting.

THIRDLY, how can the harmony of Heaven, and the choir of the celestial Hierarchy, be delightful to him, who whilst in this embodied state, seldom or never took the name
of

of God in his mouth, but in horrid and prophane oaths? A vice that has not one plea to make in it's extenuation! and so heinous, enormous, and prevalent an evil it is, that because of it the land mourneth, and salutary laws are enacted, tho' alas! in vain to suppress it.

LASTLY, how can those persons find a grateful or sublime pleasure, in joining the assembly of the first born in heaven; who here slight all divine ordinances, and seldom or never tread the courts of their God? Here indeed, some will plead want of memory to retain what they hear. But in the parable, the ground was esteemed good, that *brought forth thirty*; as well as that which *brought forth an hundred fold*. Where much is given, there only is much required. But the forsaking assembling ourselves together in religious worship, and making the sabbath a day of worldly, or prophane pleasure, as the manner of some is, I fear oftener proceeds from a depraved will, perverted by indolence, impatience, or some other fault, than a consciousness of our defects in understanding. For that would bring us to our teachers for better instructions.

MAY God of his infinite mercy grant, that we may so hear and read as to *remember*, and so *remember* as to practice!

FOR

THE conclusion of the whole matter is this, *To fear God and keep his commandments, this is the whole duty of man.* For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

LASTLY, how can those persons and
 grateful or indignant pleasure, in joining the
 assembly of the first born in heaven; who
 there meet all divine ordinances and labors
 of heaven, meet the courts of their God?
 These characters will plead want of me-
 rit to obtain what they hear. But in the
 month, the ground was effused good seed
 which, as well as that which
 those who sow, as the poor sower
 is abundantly rewarded. But the
 sowing and binding ourselves together in
 well as in the world, and making the labors
 of our hands, of prophane pleasure as the
 manner of love is, I fear exact proceeds
 from a depraved will, perverted by indolence
 impudence, of some other fault, than a con-
 sideration of our defects in understanding
 I or that would bring us to our teachers for
 better instructions. — What
 turns, and interests in the pathos? — What
 errors do we feel? What we and his brethren
 And now great

SERMON

SERMON

(120)

S E R M O N VII.

GENESIS, xlv. 4.

*I am Joseph your brother, whom ye
sold into Egypt.*

AMONG all the narratives of particular characters, that we meet with in the Old Testament, that of JOSEPH has been commonly regarded as the most curious and affecting. It has been the admiration even of those, whose contempt of the holy scriptures is sufficiently notorious. Indeed it abounds with so great a variety of such surprising as well as interesting incidents, as must highly recommend it to the perusal of every reader, not destitute of the feelings of humanity. Nothing could be more finely conceived, even tho' it were wholly the produce of the imagination, and not an history of real facts. It is a most beautiful picture of the conflicts and triumphs of virtue. It agitates, by turns, and interests all the passions.---What terrors do we feel, when we find his brethren conspiring against his life! And how great is our indignation against wretches, who
could

could act a part as villanious as it was unnatural ! How rejoiced are we to find he has the good fortune to escape this dangerous plot ; and yet what anxiety do we feel, when, instead of being restored in safety to his father, we see that he is condemned to be sold a bond slave to the *Ishmaelites* ! What pleasure does the humanity of REUBEN yield us ! And how deeply are we afflicted with the grief of JACOB ! What a variety of emotions do we afterwards feel on the various revolutions of JOSEPH'S fortune ! How are we depressed at his unjust condemnation and imprisonment ; and how elated at his enlargement and promotion ! And how deeply do we find ourselves interested for all the various characters, whose history is interwoven with his ! In the last place, how highly are we pleased to find that all these seemingly untoward incidents terminate happily, and are, in the issue, productive of the most important good to him, whom they threatened with the greatest mischief ! The genuine and undisguised truths exhibited in this simple relation, strike us with amazing force ; and it must indeed be allowed, that we very seldom find ourselves so strongly affected by any of those compositions, which are stiled dramatic, although calculated for the sole purpose of moving the passions, as we are by this inartificial, tho' surprising, narrative.

THE

THE history of JOSEPH is so well known, that I need not here recapitulate those parts of it, which are contained in the preceding chapters; I shall therefore only observe, that this, from which my text is taken, commences with an account of his making himself known to his brethren. He seems to have offered great violence to his nature, in restraining himself so long from making this discovery. He was forced to withdraw himself, from their presence, at two different times before, in order to conceal from them the effects of those strong emotions, which, with his utmost efforts, he could not wholly suppress. But to wear the disguise any longer, was not in his power. For it is said that *he could not refrain himself, before all that stood by him.* But that he might be the more at liberty to indulge every impulse of nature, and every dictate of affection, *he caused all, except his own brethren, to withdraw, and then wept aloud, so that the Egyptians, and the house of Pharaoh heard him.* Nature, in proportion as it had been restrained, like a torrent when stemmed, became the more irresistible; therefore the emotions of it, as they had long been repressed, now broke out with the greater violence. For this reason when JOSEPH would have wept in silence with his brethren, *he wept aloud.* Concerning this very tender interview, the context then adds the following particulars: *and Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph*

Joseph; doth my father yet live? And—come near to me, I pray; and they came near, and he then said, in the words of my text, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

IN treating of these words, I shall endeavour, first to shew how vain and presumptuous it is for us, to judge of the methods of the divine œconomy, which may still be working for our good, when to us it seems most to oppose it; secondly, to demonstrate the use of afflictive providence; and, lastly, to shew that JOSEPH was a type of our blessed Saviour.

FIRST, I shall endeavour to shew, how vain and presumptuous it is for us, to judge of the methods of the divine œconomy, which may still be working for our good, when to us, it seems most to oppose it. Indeed that the ways of God are unsearchable, and that it is not in the power of man to pronounce upon their issue, is a truth that requires no laboured proof, as is sufficiently evident from the instance before us. For what human penetration could discover, that the persecutions of JOSEPH were the immediate road to his future elevation? Who could foresee that a conspiracy formed against his life, should prove the most effectual means to preserve it; and that the greatest cruelty should

should be productive to him of an advantage, which could not have been hoped for from the greatest kindness? Yet this, however wonderful it may appear, was really the case, we find, in the issue. -- Indeed that a poor *Hebrew* lad, bred up in all the inexperience of pastoral simplicity, should become the first minister of an *Egyptian* monarch, strikes us, when considered only as a mere fact, with peculiar surprize. There is a variety of circumstances, which singularly enhance the improbability of it. Even to eat with an *Hebrew* was an abomination to the *Egyptians*. To these, the manners, customs, occupation, and religion of the *Hebrews*, were as odious, as from their own they were different. There was no people in the world, perhaps, to whom they had so strong an aversion. It seemed therefore, not only highly improbable, but scarcely possible, that an *Hebrew*, and he a friendless slave should become the first man, next to the sovereign, in the *Egyptian* court. But however great our surprize may be, when this matter is considered only as a simple fact; yet when it is viewed in conjunction with those circumstances by which it was accomplished, it is not mere surprize that we feel, but the height of astonishment. For all the incidents, which seemed to threaten *JOSEPH* with the greatest danger, proved to him, in the end, the most fortunate. While, in appearance,

he seemed pushed down the precipice of destruction, he was, in reality, only thrust forward in the high road to preferment. Every attack upon his life or character, every attempt to injure him, every plot to destroy him, were just so many helps to hasten and secure his promotion. Thus dark and impenetrable are the chances and changes of this mortal life; thus secret and inferutable are the ways of providence; nor is there any man, however extensive his knowledge, or deep his sagacity, who can pretend, touching the consequences of any one action, to form a certain estimate. Indeed in a moral or religious view, we all know that whatever action is well meant, will, in the ultimate issue, be productive of happy consequences, because, as it is ever pleasing to God, it cannot fail, in the next world, of being duly rewarded by him. But how far it may answer or defeat our present purpose, we cannot possibly foresee. The schemes or inventions, which, in the contemplation, we are most pleased with, often prove, in the execution, the most unfortunate.

JACOB, we may well suppose, was not a little delighted, when the happy device, (as he deemed it) of adorning his son JOSEPH with a coat of many colours, first occurred to his fond imagination; yet this silly distinction, tho' intended as a mark of peculiar affection

affection for the child, had well nigh proved fatal to him. For it was the sight of this, that was the principal cause of that dreadful conspiracy, which was formed against him by his brethren in *Dotban*, when he was sent by his father into the fields to visit them. Indeed a variety of circumstances had unhappily concurred to render him so highly obnoxious to his brethren. But they may all perhaps be easily resolved into his father's ill judged partiality for him. For very probably his dreams, had it not been for their pre-conceived aversion to him on that account, would have been but little regarded by them. But his father very unwisely, by his late present, most fatally contributed to revive and inflame all their accumulated malignity. Therefore when they saw him, habited in the envied garb, afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. Thus do our favourite schemes oft militate the most against our peace, and, instead of pleasure, produce only pain.

Now the storms begin to thicken apace about *Joseph*, and the clouds assume a most indignant aspect. But of this, though in a few moments he will make the dreadful discovery, he is not as yet sensible. For like the unwary bird, he perceives not the snare, till he is actually caught in it. Un-

conscious

conscious of guilt, he apprehends no danger. We see him therefore advance, in all the innocence and benignity of his heart, highly rejoicing that he has at last, after a tedious and wearisome journey, found his brethren, and hoping to receive a favourable account of their state and welfare, little thinking that, tho' brethren in name, they are ruffians in reality, who are glad to see him indeed, not to give him any testimony of their affection, but actually to destroy him. Fatal partiality, and more fatal envy! What prodigies of villainy have ye not produced! What mischief, distress, and wretchedness, have ye not occasioned! — Unwary Jacob! hasten to the plains of *Dothan*, behold the horrid transaction, and, with grief, reflect what an incendiary thou hast been in thine own house. Consider, that fond parents, by their capricious partiality, often become the executioners of their own offspring, especially of that child, which is most the object of their affection. But while we condemn the imprudent, let us yet pity the unfortunate father. Besides, we know not how far *Jacob* may have been, with respect to this point, in an error; for *Joseph* might very possibly have given early proof of superior merit, which will always not only justify, but require, some suitable degree of distinction; and his father may have had a much better reason for giving him the preference, than

than the very unsubstantial one of his being the child of his old age. But whatever his error, or whatever his fault may have been, his punishment for it seems sufficiently severe; for he is doomed for a length of years, to *mourn the living Joseph, as the dead.* A conspiracy is formed, and that too by those, who had sprung from his own loins, and whose duty therefore it was, to be the staff of his age, not only against the life of his darling child, but against the peace of his declining years. Instead of receiving the pleasing account he hoped for, that his sons were all well, he receives a bloody garment, the fatal proof, as he deemed it, that the son most dear to him, was now no more. Who therefore upon so melancholy, so affecting an occasion, can refrain from weeping with the unhappy ISRAEL!

But if we are distressed for the fire, how much more distressed are we for the son, while surrounded with the terrors of death, he lifts up his tender hands, and, in the anguish of his soul, supplicates for mercy to the stern dispensers of his future fate, who now stand ready to pronounce his doom! With joy indeed we see him rescued from the jaws of destruction, but that joy is almost instantly cancelled, when we perceive that the utmost lenity he can hope for, is excess of cruelty, and that instead of instant death, he

he is condemned to die daily, in all the rigours of banishment and of bondage. We see him, while hurried over the plains by the savage *Ishmaelites*, still stretch out his arms to JUDAH, and in the most moving accents, implore his affectionate interposition, to procure some farther mitigation of his inhuman sentence; and when too distant to be any longer heard, we yet see him look back in all the agony of distraction, and almost wishing he had found his grave, where he found his brethren.

Here then we stand amazed, and are ready to ask, where is Providence? Is there a God that ruleth in the earth? For if innocence has no protector; if the wicked multiply with impunity, even what they chuse; what reason have we to believe that Heaven is interested in the affairs of men? A case more peculiarly moving than the present, we can scarcely perhaps imagine to ourselves. Humanity shudders at the contemplation of it, and yet the deity seems wholly unconcerned. Here is the fury of the oppressor; but where is the deliverer? Forbear, rash man, forbear, and with patience wait the issue; for shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Nay, even tho' the righteous should be as the wicked, and one fate, in this world, should attend both, yet suffer not thy confidence in God to be shaken, but rather resolve,

solve, with JOB, to hold fast thy integrity unto the end, and to trust in him, altho' he should slay thee.

These good and virtuous, however, are not always destroyed, when they seem, in this world, to be cast down. Their sun only sets for a while, to rise again more gloriously. It is therefore as weak as it is impious, for short-sighted mortals to presume to arraign the providence, and perhaps to question the Being of God, when events happen not to correspond with our expectations, or when things happen to wear an embarrassed or untoward aspect. The clouds indeed may be black, and the storm formidable; yet the clouds may soon wear away, and the storm may quickly cease. Let us only wait a little, a very little while, and the sky will be again serene; nay, a brighter prospect perhaps will soon appear, than any we have as yet discovered. The present is all we see, for the future is wholly wrapt in obscurity. But as the present affects us only with pain, we complain of it as evil, altho' it be the means ordained, after a short interval, to procure us the most substantial good. *Joseph is not, and Simon is not,* said the venerable patriarch, *and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.* But though he had conversed with angels, and had seen God, he was, in this point, totally mistaken. He seems

seems here to judge and complain, as perhaps most other mortals, in his situation would have been too apt to do. But the truth was, these things, so far from being against him, were the most fortunate that could have befallen him. For the loss of JOSEPH, however insupportable, was nothing less than the preservation both of himself and his family. But this event was, as yet, a secret to JACOB. His grief therefore was exquisite, and, if possible, would have been still more exquisite, had he known what barbarous treatment the innocent youth he lamented, had received from his savage brethren. For how could he have endured the thought of his inexpressible distress, *when, in the anguish of his soul, he besought them, and they would not hear?* This would scarcely have failed, in a very short space, to bring down his grey hair indeed, with sorrow, to the grave. And to persuade him, when labouring under the weight of such extreme affliction, that what was intended for kindness to him, would not probably have been a vain attempt; for he would still have cried out, *all these things are against me.* But see the goodness of God! This transitory grief, O JACOB, will soon be converted into lasting joy. Even tho' brother conspire against brother, it shall, in the end, prove a blessing to both.

JOSEPH

JOSEPH indeed, in appearance, is no more;
 he is fallen as victim, not to the rapacity of
 brutes, but to the cruelty of man; and is
 sent, in all the ignominious circumstances of
 slavery, into distant exile; but there, by the
 immediate hand of God, he is soon advanced
 to the first dignities in the state. He is made
 Governor over all the land of Egypt, his
 having made ample provision against the
 preaching of dearth, which he himself by divine
 revelation, had foretold. He secures his safety
 both for Israel and his whole house, who
 otherwise it is highly probable, must have
 perished by the dreadful famine, which it
 occasioned. What a skin become, not only
 a father than ABRAHAM, but a father-in-law
 to him, who he rescued from a calamity as
 formidable as it was extraordinary. It is
 the happy means to preserve him, his wife,
 and his children, and to save his family from
 death. This, JOSEPH himself, as he naturally
 and justly observes to his brethren, upon his
 first making himself known to them, when
 he perceived their confusion at the discovery.
 God, says he, did send me before you to pre-
 serve life to you, and to deliver you from
 death. The indeed was the happy issue, which
 by the intervention of a kind providence, the
 blackest of crimes was productive of, even to
 preserve the lives of the detested authors of
 it. The malignity of the action, however,

is no way diminished by the felicity of its consequences. For the nature of every action is founded in its motives. But such is the benignity of Joseph's temper, that in the present case, he overlooks the deed, and only regards the issue of it. Nay, to ease the distress of the penitent criminals, he would fain, as it were, annihilate their guilt, and consider the whole transaction as the appointment of divine providence. Therefore says he to them, *be not grieved, ye carry with you sin, but in your hearts, that have been purged by God, a generosity as great, as their cruelty had been unparalleled, and such as no sensible man would have relational a distrust, almost equal to what they would have suffered from the bitterest reproaches. Nor could they, however great, be prejudiced, or corrupt, now being secure, that Joseph was justly entitled to far nobler satisfactions, than any of those, for which they formerly had so basely envied and persecuted him.* But happily both for them and for Joseph, the supreme disposer of all events was pleased to cause all those things, which they had desired for his destruction, to work together for their general good. And thus, says the long-suffering Jacob, *lived to see the clouds at last dispersed, and the storm is over.* The mourning of the father,

ther, and the miseries of the son, painful
 as they were, are far more than recompensed
 by the felicity of their conclusion. Nay, to
 exquisite is the joy of the old Patriarch,
 upon receiving the intelligence, that he was
 brought to him from Egypt, of his son, that
 he seems able to support it, that he had
 been to bear all his grief. For his heart,
 is said, *fainted*, a circumstance which argues
 him to have been more overpowered by it,
 than we are told he was, at any period of
 his mourning for him. This excess of joy
 indeed was but temporary, yet the founda-
 tion of it was permanent; and Jacob had
 cause, to the last moment of his life, to
 bless God for a dispensation, which though
 melancholy and mortifying for a time, was
 now to him the means of the greatest com-
 fort, and most substantial comfort. In the
 Governor of Egypt, he found not only the
 son he had so long lamented, but the pro-
 tector he so much wanted. For Canaan now
fainted by reason of the famine; millions were
 distressed, and thousands perished by it; so
 great, so alarming indeed, was the calamity,
 that it threatened even whole nations with
 destruction; but Israel, when the sorrows of
 death thus encompassed him, found a deliverer,
 as it were, among the dead. Joseph, who,
 in his estimation, was no longer among the
 living, was yet alive; and by him, in this

time of extension, he was glorified with
bread, and his extensive household garment,
which even to Isaac, who had long been
accustomed to distinguished mercies, must
appear no less wonderful than happy. And
why should I dwell any longer on this head,
since the ways of God are all as unsearch-
able, as his dispensations are gracious? I
shall therefore proceed to another distinct
tribe, but do not need ever to return
to the second place, to demonstrate the
use of afflictive Providence, or gain more of the
truth of it. One capital use of afflictions is, to wean
us from a fondness for the things below, in
order that we may fix our affections on those
above. Nothing is more inconsistent with
piety, nor productive of greater mischief to
mankind, than an immoderate attachment to
the things of this world. And yet so very
cogent are most men in the pursuit of these
perishing possessions, that there is scarcely
any kind of sin which they will not commit,
any species of villainy which they will not
practise, for the obtaining only of the most
contemptible portion of them. To this un-
happy source may easily be traced all the
frauds, treachery, and oppressions, all the de-
ceits, baseness, and dishonesty, all the tyranny,
war, and bloodshed, that distract the world;
and desolate the earth.

In such then are the dreadful consequences of setting our affections on things temporal, and of chusing them, and not God, for our portion; nothing, it is obvious, can tend more to our benefit than afflictions, as there is nothing which can more conduce to disengage us from them. This therefore is one great end, for which they were appointed by Providence. In the full tide of prosperity, men are apt to forget God, and to place all their confidence in their worldly possessions. These they adore, and not their maker. Afflictions therefore become necessary, to teach them the vanity and impotence of the Gods they have chosen, and to recal them to Him, who alone can help them in the time of need. *Before I was afflicted,* says David, *I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.* However wanton men may have been before, however vain, foolish, or inconsiderate; when distress and anguish have arrested them, they are instantly forced to recollect themselves, to examine their conduct, and to weigh their actions. Conscience will then dare to speak; and it's faithful admonitions, however before despised, can no longer be disregarded. Afflictions are of peculiar efficacy to rectify the judgment, and to enable a man to form a just estimate of things. They remove from before the eye that false medium, thro' which it was wont to view them; and present them for inspection

tion in their own proper colours. The splendor of worldly greatness fades in their presence; and, like a magic wand, they have an inherent virtue, to force all things sublunary, to assume their natural appearances. They are the best perspective, thro' which we can discover the real worth of all that we most value in this life. By their means the hollowness of pleasure, the emptiness of honours, and the impotence of wealth, are all clearly seen. To the afflicted man they appear divested of all those charms, with which they impose on the rest of mankind. He views them not merely with indifference, but contempt. For he now discovers how little, how very little, of all the great things they promise, they can really perform. He perceives that they can neither remove pain, nor diminish sorrow; and is convinced that he, who has it most in his power to command them all, may yet be miserable; incurably miserable. For wealth cannot recall the dead, nor honours alleviate anguish. Splendid robes can yield no relief to the tortured limb, nor lofty palaces give ease to the aching heart. The feasts of joy have no balm for a broken spirit, nor the songs of mirth any remedy for a wounded mind. The agony of disease cannot be intimidated by the frowns of power, nor the throbs of grief be subdued by the sound of titles. They are possessions, he finds, which, tho' great in name,

name, are but little in reality. They are miserable comforters, powerful indeed to create evils, but impotent to remove them. At the best, and when most capable of serving him, they are all, he sees, not worth even a single sin, if a single sin would purchase them. What therefore can be a more effectual antidote against the too prevailing folly, of preferring the things of this life to those of the next, than afflictions? If the love of them, as in scripture it is represented, is the root of all evil, how very beneficial must these be, how worthy the appointment of Providence, as they are so highly conducive to extinguish it?

ANOTHER use of afflictions is to subdue pride, insolence, and inhumanity; and to teach men humility, meekness, and benevolence. They, whose eyes swell with fatness, who are lusty and strong, and who have riches in possession, are apt to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, and to treat those in less fortunate circumstances, in a manner, which, instead of alleviating their wretchedness, must extremely aggravate it. It is a common observation, that men are generally as proud as they are prosperous, and that the more free they are themselves from sufferings, the less compassion they have for those of others. He, on whom the world smiles, and who seems born only to command

command the treasures of it, is too often so infatuated with his success, as to regard it, not as the free gift of Heaven, but as the just recompence of his own merit. If others fail, it is only, he thinks, because they deserve not a better fate. Their misfortune he imputes to them as a crime; and because they are unhappy, he regards them as contemptible. Those, whom Providence hath cast down, he therefore tramples on; and instead of binding up their wounds, he makes them, by his cruelty, to bleed afresh. But, if by a change of condition, the scene is reversed, and from the summit of felicity, he is reduced to the extremity of distress, his conception of things will be as different as his circumstances. For afflictions will scarcely fail to make him as humble, as before he was proud, and as compassionate as he was hard-hearted. He, who is tortured with pain, derided with scorn, or pinched with want, can feel, can pity, other men's sufferings as well as his own. He is wretched himself, and therefore interested for all the wretched. He is taught by his own calamity, that every mode of it is hard to bear, and much the harder for being neglected by those, in whose power it is to relieve it. This therefore determines him to befriend every man according to his ability, and to engage the benevolence of others by the exertion of his own. The mansion of adversity, is the school of humanity;

humanity; for it's tendency to improve the tempers of mankind, is no less evident than that of prosperity is to corrupt them. In every place indeed afflictions are loudly complained of; but the viciousness of the world would, by no means, be so great, nor it's depravity so consummate, were they still more general, and more pressing. For they are the parent of piety, and the guardian of virtue.

AGAIN, afflictions are appointed, by providence, for the trial of men's faith, and the manifestation of their sincerity. This indeed is the grand object of a state of probation in general; but the severer dispensations seem evidently intended for the production and illustration of more distinguished virtues. All the heroisms of saints and martyrs could only by these have been called forth into existence. Were it not for these, all the eminent instances, upon record, of patience, constancy, and fortitude would never have been heard of. Nor without these, could the efficacy of faith, and the vigour of religion, have been rendered conspicuous. But I must hasten to consider another use of afflictions, which is to encourage men to excel in virtue, by an imitation of those illustrious examples of it, which they are calculated to produce. In the most illustrious examples of it, which they are calculated to produce, and the most illustrious examples of it, which they are calculated to produce.

THE languor of precept to operate upon the human mind, has been generally observed, and as generally lamented. The most eloquent perfwasives and animated exhortations to any landable purfuit, are notoriously of little weight, when not enforced by example. But men are almoft infenfibly drawn to imitate, what they fee others practice, altho they cannot be prevailed with, to perform what they advife. Nor, in this cafe, are they fo eafily deterred by difficulties: for moft men have fo favourable an opinion of their own abilities, as to believe themfelves capable of thofe virtuous or heroick actions they fee others attain. Therefore the more eminent an example is, the more extenfive will be it's influence, and the more general it's utility. But a character can only become conspicuous, and confequently an example eminent, by encountering trials, and vanquifhing difficulties of an uncommon magnitude. Hence therefore the celebrity of ABRAHAM and JOB, of the one for his patience, and of the other for his faith; and hence the elevation of all the moft diftinguifhed characters both of the Jewifh and of the christian church. It is to perfecutions, the reproach of humanity, that the world is indebted for confeflors and martyrs, the glory of religion. The flames of malignity lighted up the flames of zeal; and the moft hostile defigns againft the

the church, proved in the event, of the most important service to it, by producing such illustrious patterns of consummate virtue.

THE last use of afflictions, which I shall mention, is, that they afford us, as they are indiscriminately the lot of all men, whether good or bad, a very important proof of the certainty of a future state. The justice of GOD evidently requires that every man should be recompensed according to his works, and that the condition of each should be exactly suited to his conduct. But this, we see, is by no means the case in the present state. Nay, so far is it indeed otherwise, that it has often been the complaint of good men, that the most vicious are here the most fortunate. DAVID, it seems, was so fully possessed with this notion, and so deeply affected with it, that, before he had more maturely considered the matter, his faith, as he himself owns, was extremely shaken by it. *My feet, says he, were almost gone, my treadings had well nigh slipped.* And why? *I was grieved at the wicked; I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity.* For they are in no peril of death; but are lusty and strong. They come in no misfortune like other folk; neither are they plagued like other men. JOB likewise, having, long before DAVID, made the same observation, presumes even to expostulate upon it with GOD. *Wherefore, saith he, do the wicked live,*

live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eye. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Equally remarkable are the words of the Prophet JEREMIAH on this subject, and equally passionate. *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy, that deal very treacherously.* Indeed that the wicked are often prosperous, is a fact so extremely evident, that we need not have recourse to scripture for any proof to establish it. But whether they are in general, more prosperous than the good, is not so clear. For tho' they sometimes escape evils, to which the upright are exposed by their uprightness, yet they frequently subject themselves, by their vices, to a multitude of others, which the good are protected from by their virtue. And it might perhaps be demonstrated that godliness, even with respect to things temporal, has considerably the advantage. But be this as it may, it is too obvious to be made a doubt of, that good men are not only cast down, but even destroyed in this world, that they are daily afflicted and persecuted, and that they share in all the bitterest calamities, which are the portion of mortality.—What then are we to infer from this? that there is no God, or that he is not interested in the affairs of men? Neither; but that there is a fate to succeed the

the present, in which all these inequalities will be adjusted, and in which every man will receive according to what he hath done in this life, whether it be good or bad.----- There JOSEPH will be rewarded for his virtue, with treasures far more lasting than those of Egypt, and with honours far more illustrious than any which PHARAOH could bestow; and there he will find that the afflictions, which he had been harassed with in his passage thro' this world, were all designed for his future as well as for his present good, as they wrought for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,---which will be conferred on him by JESUS CHRIST the righteous, of whom, in a variety of instances, he was a type, as I shall, in the third and last place, endeavour to shew.

To point out all the particulars of this striking resemblance, would far exceed the limits of my present discourse; I shall therefore only take notice of a few of them, altho' I think a sufficient number to establish the proposition.

JOSEPH, as we have already seen was hated by his brethren, and that, as appears from his history, for these three reasons,---because he was peculiarly dear to his father, because he brought to him an evil report of his brethren,

thren, and accused them of criminal behaviour,---and because he foretold them his future exaltation and pre-eminence.--So likewise our Saviour was hated by the Jews, his brethren according to the flesh, for being declared the well-beloved son of God,---for reproving them for their sins, as he did during the whole course of his ministry, and for foretelling, as he did, when he stood, immediately after his apprehension, before the high priest, that they should see him sitting at the right hand of God.

JOSEPH was sent by his father to his brethren at a distance, when they in return for his affectionate intention of serving them, as far as it lay in his power, conspired against his life. In like manner our Saviour was sent by God, his father, from his eternal bosom, to the lost sheep of the house of ISRAEL; when the Jews, whom he had fed, healed, and instructed, formed a design of putting him to death.

JOSEPH was sold for twenty pieces of silver, and given up into the hands of strangers by his brethren. Thus was our Saviour sold for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave, Exod. 21. 32, and delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Romans.

JOSEPH'S

JOSEPH's garment was dipped in blood:---
So the humanity, which our Saviour was
cloathed with, suffered a bloody death.

REUBEN pleaded strongly for JOSEPH's re-
lease; but in vain. PILATE likewise most
earnestly sought to release our Saviour, and
went out of the judgment-hall, three dif-
ferent times, to expostulate with his malici-
ous enemies; but to no purpose. For in the
end they prevailed with him to crucify the
LORD of life.

JOSEPH lay three years in prison, and
arrived at glory by sufferings and humilia-
tions. So our Saviour lay three days in the
grave, and underwent all the rigour of
crucity, so that there was no sorrow like unto
his sorrow, before his exaltation to the right
hand of power.

JOSEPH was set over the house of PHARAOH,
and over all Egypt, and PHARAOH alone was
above him. Thus CHRIST was made the
head of the church, and every creature was
made subject to him; but he himself, as he
was man, was subject to God.

JOSEPH was sent by Providence into Egypt
to provide a place for his brethren. So our
Saviour is gone into Heaven to prepare
a place

a place for all them that truly believe in him.

JOSEPH's peculiar affection for one of his brethren, is well known; so also is our Saviour's affection for one of his disciples. He was with him on the Mount of Glory; he was with him in the Garden of Sorrow;

JOSEPH freely forgave his brethren their barbarous and inhuman treatment of him; and returned all their cruelty, with a series of the most kind and beneficent actions. Our Saviour did all this, and much more; for he not only forgave his enemies, and intreated his father to forgive them likewise; even in the hour of his crucifixion, but willingly offered himself a ransom for their guilt, and for that of the whole world, which the united host of Heaven could not have atoned for.

Through JOSEPH was application to be made to PHARAOH. So application is to be made to God through Jesus Christ, the mediator, by whose intercession alone, we can have access to the King immortal, and to the throne of grace.

THE parallel might be extended much farther; but whoever duly considers the wonderful

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let us not suffer ourselves to be overcome of evil, but let us overcome evil with good. Let us freely forgive, generously befriend, and heartily pray for, the authors of all our wrongs; and let us fully demonstrate that their violence and inhumanity, tend rather to excite our pity, than to extinguish our benevolence. In patience let us possess our souls, and in wisdom guide all our actions. Let us prepare for the sharpest conflicts, when we think ourselves the least exposed to them; and be as ready always to resist temptations, as we are liable to encounter them. Nor let us esteem virtue the less, for the evils it may sometimes occasion; nor pursue it with the less ardour for the dangers which attend it. And though calamity should succeed calamity, and our day of trial should prove as tedious as it is severe, let it neither weaken our faith, nor shake our constancy; for in due season we shall surely reap, if we faint not.



F **I** **N** **I** **S**
 deliver us in the hour of distress, and who
 certainly if patience be allowed to have its
 perfect work, will enable us to stand
 together for our good. Whatever injuries
 receive, whatever persecutions we endure,
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